

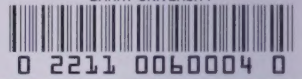
# L'ENFANT AND WASHINGTON



INSTITUT FRANÇAIS DE WASHINGTON • HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS



MONSIGNOR WILLIAM BARRY MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
BARRY UNIVERSITY



0 2211 0060004 0











## L'ENFANT AND WASHINGTON



# INSTITUT FRANÇAIS DE WASHINGTON

---

## EXTRACT FROM THE ACT OF INCORPORATION

"An association *to promote* in the United States of America the study of French civilization and history, literature and art, and *to preserve* the memory of French contributions to the development of American civilization *by endowing* or otherwise aiding in the establishment of Professorships, Courses of Lectures, Fellowships, and Scholarships, prizes and awards, libraries, archives and museums, in cooperation with Universities, Colleges, Learned Societies or Individuals, and *by publishing* documents, special studies and periodicals."

The certificate of incorporation was signed at Washington, D. C., on the 22nd day of December, 1926, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the day when Benjamin Franklin arrived in Paris to negotiate a Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the United States of America and France.

## HONORARY PRESIDENT

GENERAL JOHN J. PERSHING

## OFFICERS

JAMES BROWN SCOTT  
*President*

JULES A. BAISNÉE  
*Secretary General*

HENRI HYVERNAT  
*Vice-President*

THOMAS H. HEALY  
*Treasurer*

## TRUSTEES

JULES A. BAISNÉE

GILBERT CHINARD

FREDERIC A. DELANO

MRS. JAMES CARROLL FRAZER

THOMAS H. HEALY

GEORGE NEELY HENNING

DAVID JAYNE HILL

HENRI HYVERNAT

MISS ELIZABETH S. KITE


LOUIS T. ROULEAU

JAMES BROWN SCOTT

## EDITOR

GILBERT CHINARD





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2023 with funding from  
Kahle/Austin Foundation





MAJOR PIERRE CHARLES L'ENFANT

Leon Chatelain, Architect



HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS  
INSTITUT FRANÇAIS DE WASHINGTON

CAHIER III

# L'ENFANT AND WASHINGTON

1791—1792

PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS  
NOW BROUGHT TOGETHER FOR  
THE FIRST TIME

BY  
ELIZABETH S. KITE

INTRODUCTION  
BY J. J. JUSSERAND  
Ambassador of France to the United States (1902-1925)

FOREWORD  
BY CHARLES MOORE  
Chairman, National Commission of Fine Arts



THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS  
BALTIMORE  
1929

*Barry University Library*  
*Miami, Fla. 33161*  
**BARRY UNIVERSITY**



Copyright 1929 by  
Institut Francais de Washington

**The Lord Baltimore Press**  
BALTIMORE, MD., U. S. A.



## FOREWORD

*Pierre Charles L'Enfant is now placed in historic relation to the design of the City of Washington. Many myths have gathered about his name, so that it is high time this service should be done him—and us. Miss Kite has accomplished the task by a chronological arrangement of the records. L'Enfant is permitted to speak for himself, during his work, to those with whom he was actually working, giving his reasons for acting when and as he did. As a result he emerges from the record an abler man, a finer character and a greater artist than tradition has made him, and always a gentleman. Actions we have been led to call arbitrary are found to have had justification. The destruction of Daniel Carroll's house was not without warrant, at least as L'Enfant understood his powers. He hurt himself but he saved the great plan. His contention that the reproduction of his Plan of Washington was within his province, and that his should be the benefit had the authority of the Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson. L'Enfant had sound public reasons as well as private ones, for withholding it from publication at the time. Differences of opinion were bound to occur between the designer working on the spot and authorities in far-off Philadelphia, and also with the Commissioners, one of whom was interested on behalf of his relatives while the other two lived at a distance and made only hurried and infrequent visits to the Federal City.*

*The wonder is that L'Enfant, who spoke another language, both as a man and as an artist, should have been able very largely to accomplish his purposes, and in so brief a time to put his visions in the way of realization. This happy result was due to the inherent fineness and reasonableness of the Plan itself.*

*In spite of his early and summary dismissal (which, we may reasonably believe, would not have happened had President Washington been on the ground) L'Enfant's plan has persisted. A full century after that plan was adopted, a Commission composed entirely of artists (who were also experienced planners) was called upon to do for the entire District of Columbia what L'Enfant had done for a portion of that area. After mature study, in the light of the finest examples the world had produced, this Commission reinstated the authority of the L'Enfant Plan and carried it to its logical conclusions in new territory. This action reflected*



credit not only on the genius of L'Enfant, but also on the Commission itself, which had the wisdom to recognize the supreme merit of the original plan and the good sense—and modesty—to build upon it.

L'Enfant claimed complete originality for his plan, and he is justified. No other person gave him substantial aid in the design and he did not get ideas from the city plans supplied by Jefferson. As a Frenchman, however, he had inherited the great tradition in city-building. It is to be remembered that while the Paris of L'Enfant's day was still a crowded, congested walled city of some seven hundred thousand inhabitants, the architects of Louis XIV, had laid out in open fields the central axis of the future capital of France. To Louis XIV, Colbert, Le-Nôtre, Blondel and the Academy of Architects, Paris owes those vast reaches of avenue and boulevard which are today the crowning features of the most beautiful of cities. The Madeleine, the Place de la Concorde, the Invalides, and the great axial avenues from the Garden of the Tuileries to the Place d'Etoile, all were foreshadowed in plans that have come down to us from the days of the Grand Monarch. The cardinal features of L'Enfant's plan—the long vista from one focal point to another, the radiating avenues, and especially the conception of the entire city as a well-articulated unity—these ideas and ideals were already realized in Versailles, planned as the capital of France, the city in which L'Enfant's early years were spent.

Thus it was that the Commission of 1901, in replanning Washington, were not content merely with taking the L'Enfant plan as a basis, but they also visited and studied on the ground those ancient achievements among which L'Enfant himself lived and moved and had his being—Paris, Versailles, Fontainebleau, Vaux le Vicomte—all the embodiment of the genius and taste of that master of landscape in connection with public buildings, Le Nôtre.

So it is that we have to thank the sagacity of President Washington in selecting L'Enfant, the best man he knew, to design the Federal City, and also for approving the novel plan as prepared. Moreover, we deem ourselves fortunate in that L'Enfant himself was able to bring to his task a mental training and a knowledge of the past such as probably no other person in America had. The story of his experiences excites our pity for a misunderstood man, and for ourselves as well, because a little more tolerance at the right time would have saved many mistakes that have been slow in their correcting.

CHARLES MOORE, Chairman,  
National Commission of Fine Arts.



## CHRONOLOGY

### L'ENFANT AND WASHINGTON

		PAGE
1789	Sept. 11. L'Enfant applied to Washington for permission to plan the Federal City...	34
1790	July 9. <i>Residence Act</i> passed by Congress....	31
1791	Jan. 22. Commissioners appointed by the President for the Federal District.....	32
	March 1. L'Enfant instructed to proceed to Georgetown "to survey the ground"..	35
	March 11. First letter of L'Enfant to Jefferson describing the proposed site.....	35
	March 26. L'Enfant's First Report to Washington.	43
	March 28. Washington visited Georgetown.....	43
	March 28. First meeting of Commissioners.....	43
	March 29. Washington's letter to Jefferson of March 31, fixes this as the day L'Enfant was ordered to " <i>have the whole surveyed and laid off as a city.</i> ".....	43
	April 10. Jefferson wrote L'Enfant, " <i>I am happy the President has left the planning of the city in such good hands.</i> ".....	49
	April 23. Daniel Carroll announced to James Madison the appointment of L'Enfant.	50
	May <i>May and the first two weeks of June</i> , were taken up with intensive work on the <i>plan</i> , and its adaptation to the accidents of the site. Washington was touring the South at this time.....	51
	June 22. Probable date of <i>historic visit of L'Enfant to Mount Vernon and detailed discussion of the plan which was accompanied with the memorial</i> to the President of <i>June 22</i> . This was the first " <i>Plan.</i> " It was somewhat changed in the final form.....	52
	Aug. 28. Conference in Philadelphia; method of * procedure outlined in memorial of Au-	

		PAGE
	gust 19, discussed with Washington, Jefferson, Madison — Perfected "Plan" presented and <i>accepted as authoritative</i> by President .....	61
Sept.	8. Jefferson with Madison attended conference of Commissioners called by President. Sale of lots decided for Oct. 17-19 .....	73
Oct.	19. In enthusiasm of sale, L'Enfant refused the Commissioners the use of the "Plan." They were greatly offended..	77
Nov.	6. Washington rebuked L'Enfant <i>indirectly</i> through his secretary, Mr. Lear....	79
Nov.	21. Daniel Carroll of Duddington and Major L'Enfant notified the President of the demolition of the Duddington House by L'Enfant .....	79
Nov.	26. Commissioners ordered demolition stopped in absence of L'Enfant in Virginia where he had gone to purchase the Aquia quarries. On his return L'Enfant ordered the demolition completed.....	83
Dec.	2. Washington <i>pointedly</i> and <i>directly</i> rebuked L'Enfant, saying, you remain " <i>only on condition you conduct yourself in subordination to the authority of the Commissioners.</i> " ..	85
Dec.	6. L'Enfant ably defended his action to the Commissioners .....	85
Dec.	7. Explained action to President, excusing himself, proving he was <i>within his rights according to the agreement</i> regarding the adopted plan. Asked that <i>a line of demarcation be drawn between him and the Commissioners.</i> Washington turned the letter over to Jefferson.	89
Dec.	11. Jefferson made a very significant pronouncement that " <i>the will of the Commissioners cannot be the line of demar-</i>	



			PAGE
		<i>cation between themselves and their subordinates, that the President had the power to draw that line—but that in L'Enfant's case the only safe thing was to "submit him to the unlimited control of the Commissioners." This attitude the President adopted.....</i>	93
Dec.	13.	Washington repeated rebuke and used expression, "The Commissioners stand between you and the President.".....	92
Dec.	16.	L'Enfant wrote out instructions for Roberdeau for winter work.....	97
Dec.	22.	L'Enfant wrote Commissioners regarding the house of Notley Young.....	101
Dec.	25.	Sent in requisition for supplies to Commissioners. ....	103
Dec.	?	Went to Philadelphia to superintend the preparation of the plan for engraving. ....	103
1792	Jan.	9. All workmen, overseers, commissary, etc., discharged by Commissioners....	105
	Jan.	17. Washington wrote Commissioners fully approving this act of authority.....	133
	Jan.	17. L'Enfant sent memoir of 22 pages to President, prepared after his arrival in Philadelphia, outlining the work to be done up to 1800, giving estimate of all expenses. No attention was ever paid to this document.....	110
	Jan.	27. Roberdeau arrested and put in prison by Commissioners for continuing to follow orders of L'Enfant.....	133
	Feb.	6. Letters of Roberdeau intercepted or delayed. When news reached L'Enfant he wrote President imploring release of his overseer and in closing warned, "... unless power to effect the work with advantage to the public and credit to myself is left me" resignation would be inevitable.....	133

	PAGE
Feb. 17. Letter full of distress regarding the engraving of the "Plan" that had been transferred to Ellicott after the Commissioners had refused to allow the measurements to be made at L'Enfant's request. ....	140
Feb. 22. Washington wrote Jefferson that the "Plan" <i>should bear L'Enfant's name</i> . Ellicott had placed his own in lower right hand corner and L'Enfant's did not any where appear. This was never changed. The "Plan" was allowed to go forth to the world as Ellicott's production. ....	144
Feb. 22. Jefferson wrote asking L'Enfant if he would continue his services, since it had been determined that "whoever wishes for employment . . . <i>must apply to the Commissioners directly</i> , the President being decided not to meddle with those details." ....	144
Feb. 23. L'Enfant wrote at length of what the Commissioners had done to thwart his efforts (this he did in self-justification since so much stress had been placed upon their good-will); he explained why he had been forced to act as he had. He ended with the words, "If therefore the law requires . . . that <i>my continuance shall depend upon an appointment from the Commissioners</i> , I cannot, nor would I under <i>any circumstances submit myself to it</i> ." ....	145
1792 Feb. 26. Washington sent his secretary to plead with L'Enfant but with the reiterated condition that he <i>submit himself to the Commissioners</i> . L'Enfant made the remark which was carried back to the	



		PAGE
	President, " <i>I have already heard enough of this matter.</i> " This offended Washington. ....	151
Feb.	27. Jefferson wrote curt note of dismissal to L'Enfant. ....	151
Feb.	27. L'Enfant replied directly to Washington: "under the present system" he could not any longer serve. ....	152
Feb.	28. Washington wrote L'Enfant for the last time; this letter, L'Enfant refused to believe he had read before signing. ....	154
March	8. Washington wrote to Dr. Stuart the sum he thought would satisfy L'Enfant. ....	159
March	9. Proprietors petitioned President, through Mr. Walker, to restore L'Enfant. ....	167
March	9. Proprietors wrote L'Enfant enclosing petition—neither ever received by L'Enfant. Copies afterwards sent him. ....	171
March	10. L'Enfant in mean time wrote Proprietors giving reasons for his withdrawal and offering excellent advice to guide them in future. ....	161
March	14. Jefferson answered petitioners stating that L'Enfant's conditions were " <i>dismissal of Commissioners or independence of them</i> " of which L'Enfant wrote, "no greater lie could ever be." ....	177
March	19. Roberdeau went to Georgetown to settle accounts, etc. ....	172 n.
March	21. Second letter of Proprietors urging L'Enfant to reconsider. ....	177
April	1. L'Enfant ended correspondence by dignified letter of appreciation, but one from which there could be no appeal. ...	181





## INTRODUCTION

### MAJOR L'ENFANT AND THE FEDERAL CITY \*

#### I

Little more than a century ago the hill on which rises the Capitol of the federal city and the ground around it were covered with woods and underbrush; a few scattered farms had been built here and there, with one or two exceptions mere wooden structures whose low roofs scarcely emerged from their leafy surroundings. Not very long before, Indians had used to gather on that eminence and hold their council-fires.

As far now as the eye can reach the picturesque outline of one of the finest cities that exist is discovered; steeples and pinnacles rise above the verdure of the trees lining the avenues within the unaltered frame supplied by the blue hills of Maryland and Virginia.

The will of Congress, the choice made by the great man whose name the city was to bear, the talents of a French officer, caused this change.

Debates and competitions had been very keen; more than one city of the North and of the South had put forth pleas to be the one selected and become the capital: Boston, where the first shot had been fired; Philadelphia, where independence had been proclaimed; Yorktown, where it had been won—Yorktown, modest as a city, but glorious by the events its name recalled, now an out-of-the-way borough, rarely visited, and where fifty white inhabitants are all that people the would-be capital of the new-born Union. New York also had been in the ranks, as well as Kingston, Newport, Wilmington, Trenton, Reading, Lancaster, Annapolis, Williamsburg, and several others. Passions were stirred to such an extent that the worst was feared, and that, incredible as it may now seem, Jefferson could speak of the “necessity of a compromise to save the Union.”

A compromise was, in fact, resorted to, which consisted in choosing no city already in existence, but building a new one on purpose. This solution had been early thought of, for Washington had written on October 12, 1783, to Chevalier de Chastellux: “They (Congress) have lately determined to make choice of some convenient spot near the Falls

\* From *With Americans of Past and Present Days*; copyright, 1916, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers, with the consent of the author.

of the Delaware for the permanent residence of the sovereign power of these United States." But would-be capitals still persisted in hoping they might be selected.

Congress made up its mind for good on the 16th of July, 1790, and decided that the President should be intrusted with the care of choosing "on the river Potomac" a territory, ten miles square, which should become the "Federal territory" and the permanent seat of the Government of the United States.

Washington thereupon quickly reached a decision; a great rider all his life, the hills and vales of the region were familiar to him; it soon became certain that the federal city would rise one day where it now stands. The spot seemed to him a particularly appropriate one for a reason which has long ceased to be so very telling, and which he constantly mentions in his letters as the place's "centrality."

But what sort of a city should it be? A residential one for statesmen, legislators, and judges, or a commercial one with the possibilities, considered then of the first order, afforded by the river, or a mixture of both? Should it be planned in view of the present or of the future, and of what sort of future?

With the mind of an artist and in some sense of a prophet, perceiving future time as clearly as if it were the present, a man foresaw, over a century ago, what we now see with our eyes. He was a French officer who had fought for the cause of independence, and had remained in America after the war, Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant.

Some researches in French and American archives have allowed me to trace his ancestry, and to add a few particulars to what was already known of him.

Born at Paris, on August 2, 1754, he was the son of Pierre L'Enfant, "Painter in ordinary to the King in his Manufacture of the Gobelins." The painter, whose wife was Marie Charlotte Leullier, had for his specialty landscapes and battle-scenes. Born at Anet, in 1704, on a farm which he bequeathed to his children, he was a pupil of Parrocel and had been elected an Academician in 1745. Some of his pictures are at Tours; six are at Versailles, representing as many French victories: the taking of the Menin, 1744; of Fribourg, 1744; of Tournay, 1745; the battle of Fontenoy, 1745 (a favorite subject, several times painted by him); the battle of Laufeldt, 1747, where that young officer, destined to be Washington's partner in the Yorktown campaign, Count Rochambeau, received, as we have seen before, his first wounds. The painter died a very old man, in the Royal Manufacture, 1787.



Young L'Enfant grew up among artistic surroundings, and, as subsequent events showed, received instruction as an architect and engineer. The cause of the United States had in him one of its earliest enthusiasts. In 1777, being then twenty-three, possessed of a commission of lieutenant in the French colonial troops, he sailed for America on one of those ships belonging to Beaumarchais's mythical firm of "Hortalez and Co.," a firm whose cargoes consisted in soldiers and ammunition for the insurgents, and which was as much a product of the dramatist's brain as Figaro himself. Figaro, it is averred, has had a great influence in this world; Hortalez and Co. had not a small one, either. The ship had been named after the secretary of state, who was to conclude, the following year, the United States' only alliance, *Le Comte de Vergennes*, a name, wrote Beaumarchais, "fit to bring luck to the cargo, which is superb." The superb cargo consisted, as usual, in guns and war supplies, also in men who might be of no less use for the particular sort of trade Hortalez and Co. were conducting. "Some good engineers and some cavalry officers will soon arrive," Silas Deane was then writing to Congress. One of the engineers was Pierre Charles L'Enfant. His coming had preceded by one month the sailing of another ship with another appropriate name, the ship *La Victoire*, which brought Lafayette.

L'Enfant served first as a volunteer and at his own expense. "In February, 1778," we read in an unpublished letter of his to Washington, "I was honored with a commission of captain of engineers, and by leave of Congress attached to the Inspector-general. . . . Seeing [after the winter of 1778-9] no appearance of an active campaign to the northward, my whole ambition was to attend the Southern army, where it was likely the seat of war would be transferred." He was, accordingly, sent to Charleston, and obtained "leave to join the light infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Laurens; his friendship furnished me," he relates, "with many opportunities of seeing the enemy to advantage."<sup>1</sup>

Not "to advantage," however, did he fight at Savannah, when the French and Americans, under d'Estaing and Lincoln, were repulsed with terrible loss. The young captain was leading one of the vanguard columns in the American contingent and, like d'Estaing himself, was grievously wounded. He managed to escape to Charleston. I was, he said, "in my bed till January, 1780. My weak state of health did not permit me to work at the fortifications of Charleston, and when the enemy debarked, I was still obliged to use a crutch."<sup>2</sup> He took part,

<sup>1</sup> Philadelphia, February 18, 1782. Washington papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>2</sup> Same letter.

however, in the fight, replacing a wounded major, and was made a prisoner at the capitulation. Rochambeau negotiated his exchange in January, 1782, for Captain von Heyden, a Hessian officer.

"Your zeal and active services," Washington wrote back to L'Enfant, "are such as reflect the highest honor on yourself and are extremely pleasing to me, and I have no doubt they will have their due weight with Congress in any future promotion in your corps."<sup>3</sup> They had, in fact, in the following year, when, by a vote of the assembly, L'Enfant was promoted a major of engineers, 1783.

His knowledge of the art of fortification, his merit as a disciplinarian, the part he had taken, as he recalls in a letter to Count de La Luzerne,<sup>4</sup> in devising the earliest "system of discipline and exercises which was finally adopted in the American army" (all that was done in that line was not by Steuben alone), rendered his services quite useful. His gifts as an artist, his cleverness at catching likenesses made him welcome among his brother officers. He would in the dreary days of Valley Forge draw pencil portraits of them, one, we know, of Washington, at the request of Lafayette, who wanted also to have a painted portrait. "I misunderstood you," the general wrote him from Fredericksburg, on September 25, 1778; "else I would have had the picture made by Peale when he was at Valley Forge. When you requested me to sit to Monsieur Lanfang"—thus spelled, showing how pronounced by Washington—"I thought it was only to obtain the outlines and a few shades of my features, to have some prints struck from."

Some such pencil portraits by L'Enfant subsist, for example in the Glover family at Washington, and are creditable and obviously true-to-nature sketches.

Whenever, during the war or after, something in any way connected with art was wanted, L'Enfant was, as a matter of course, appealed to, whether the question was of a portrait, of a banqueting hall, of a marble palace, a jewel, a solemn procession, a fortress to be raised, or a city to be planned. A man of many accomplishments, with an overflow of ideas and few competitors, he was the factotum of the new nation. When the French minister, La Luzerne, desired to arrange a grand banquet in honor of the birth of the Dauphin (the first one, who lived only eight years), he had a hall built on purpose, in Philadelphia, and L'Enfant was the designer. Baron de Closen, Rochambeau's aide,

<sup>3</sup> March 1, 1782. Washington papers.

<sup>4</sup> Brother of the minister to the United States, New York, December 10, 1787; unpublished. Archives of the French Ministry of Colonies.



writes as to this in his journal: "M. de La Luzerne offered a dinner that day to the legion of Lauzun, which had arrived the same morning (August 30, 1782). The hall which he caused to be built on purpose for the fête he gave on the occasion of the birth of the Dauphin, is very large and as beautiful as it can be. One cannot imagine a building in better taste; simplicity is there united with an air of dignity. It has been erected under the direction of Mr. de L'Enfant, a French officer, in the service of the American corps of engineers." Clousen adds that "Mr. Barbé de Marbois, counselor of embassy of our court, is too modest to admit that his advice had something to do with the result."

When peace came, those officers who had fought shoulder to shoulder with the Americans returned home, bringing to the old continent new and fruitful ideas, those especially pertaining to equality and to the unreasonableness of class distinctions. Liberty had been learned from England; equality was from America.

L'Enfant was one of those who went back to France, but he did not stay. He had been away five years and wanted to see his old father, the painter, whose end now was near. A royal brevet of June 13, 1783, had conferred on the officer a small French pension of three hundred livres, "in consideration of the usefulness of his services, and of the wounds received by him during the American war."<sup>6</sup> He sailed for France late in the same year, reaching Havre on the 8th of December.

The Society of the Cincinnati had been founded in May. For the insignia appeal had been made as usual to the artist of the army,<sup>7</sup> L'Enfant, who was, moreover, commissioned by Washington, first president of the association, to avail himself of his journey to order from some good Paris jeweller the eagles to be worn by the members, L'Enfant himself being one. He was also to help in organizing the French branch of the society. Difficulties had first been encountered, for the reason that no foreign order was then allowed in France, but it was recognized that this could scarcely be considered a foreign one. In an unpublished letter to Rochambeau, Marshal de Ségur, minister of war, said: "His Majesty the King asks me to inform you that he allows you to accept

<sup>6</sup> Brevet 14,302. Archives of the Ministry of War, Paris.

<sup>7</sup> Steuben writes him from West Point on July 1, 1783, sending him "a resolution of the convention of the Cincinnati of June 19, 1783, by which I am requested," he says, "to transmit their thanks to you for your care and ingenuity in preparing the designs which were laid before them by the president on that day." Original in the L'Enfant papers, in the possession of Doctor James Dudley Morgan, of Washington, a descendant of the Digges family, the last friends of L'Enfant. To him my thanks are due for having allowed me to use those valuable documents. [This collection is now in the Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.—Ed.]

this honorable invitation (to be a member). He even wants you to assure General Washington, in his behalf, that he will always see with extreme satisfaction all that may lead to a maintenance and strengthening of the ties formed between France and the United States. The successes and the glory which have been the result and fruit of this union have shown how advantageous it is, and that it should be perpetuated." Concerning the institution itself the minister wrote: "It is equally honorable because of the spirit which has inspired its creation and of the virtues and talents of the celebrated general whom it has chosen as its president."<sup>8</sup>

L'Enfant sent to Washington glowing accounts of the way the idea had been welcomed in France, and told him of the first meetings held, one at the house of Rochambeau, Rue du Cherche-Midi, for officers in the French service, and another at the house of Lafayette, Rue de Bourbon, for French officers who held their commissions from Congress, both groups deciding thereupon to unite, under Admiral d'Estaing as president-general.<sup>9</sup>

What proved for L'Enfant, according to circumstances, one of his chief qualities, as well as one of his chief defects, was that, whatever the occasion, he ever saw "en grand." It had been understood that he would pay the expenses of his journey, and that the Society of the Cincinnati would only take charge of those resulting from the making of the eagles. His own modest resources had been, as Duportail testified, freely spent by him during the war for the good of the cause, and little enough was left him. Nevertheless, did he write to Alexander Hamilton "being arrived in France, everything there concurred to strengthen the sentiment which had made me undertake that voyage, and the reception which the Cincinnati met with soon induced me to appear in that country in a manner consistent with the dignity of the society of which I was regarded as the representative." He spent without counting: "My abode at the court produced expenses far beyond the sums I had at first thought of." He ordered the eagles from the best "artists, who rivalled each other for the honor of working for the society,"<sup>10</sup> but wanted, however, to be paid; and a letter to Rochambeau, written later, shows him grappling with the problem of satisfying Duval and Francastel of Paris, who had supplied the eagles on credit, and to whom the large sum of twenty-two thousand three hundred and three livres were

<sup>8</sup> December 18, 1783. Rochambeau papers.

<sup>9</sup> Asa Bird Gardner, *The Order of the Cincinnati in France*, 1905, pp. 9 ff.

<sup>10</sup> An undated memoir (May, 1787?), in the Hamilton papers, Library of Congress.

still due. These money troubles caused L'Enfant to shorten his stay in France; he was back in New York on the 29th of April, 1784, and after some discussion and delay, the society "Resolved, that, in consideration of services rendered by Major L'Enfant, the general meeting make arrangements for advancing him the sum of one thousand five hundred and forty-eight dollars, being the amount of the loss incurred by him in the negotiation for a number of eagles, or orders, of the Cincinnati."<sup>11</sup>

## II

The country was free; war was over now, people felt; for ever, many fondly hoped. Settled in New York, where appeals to his talents as an architect and engineer made him prosperous for a time, L'Enfant believed such hopes to be vain, and that the country should at once make preparations so exhaustive that its wealth and defenselessness should not tempt any greedy enemy. He placed the problem before Congress, in a memoir still unprinted, which offers particular interest in our days, when the same problem is being again discussed.

"Sensible," wrote L'Enfant, in the creditable if not faultless English he then spoke,<sup>12</sup> "of the situation of affairs, and well impregnated with the spirit of republican government, I am far from intimating the idea of following other nations in their way of securing themselves against insult or invasions, surrounded as they are with powerful neighbors, who, being the objects of reciprocal jealousy, are forced to secure not only their frontier, but even their inland towns with fortifications, the much happier situation of the United States rendering those measures of little or no necessity."

The States must act differently; but not to act at all would be folly. "How and upon what foundations could it be supposed that America will have nothing to fear from a rupture between any of the European Powers? . . . A neutral Power, it will be said, receives the benefit of

<sup>11</sup> Text annexed to L'Enfant's letter to Rochambeau, June 15, 1786. (Rochambeau papers.) On August 1, 1787, however, Francastel was still unpaid, for at that date one of L'Enfant's friends, Duplessis, *i. e.*, the Chevalier de Mauduit du Plessis, who, like himself, had served as a volunteer in the American army, writes him: "J'ai vu ici M. Francastel le bijoutier qui vous a fait une fourniture considérable de médailles de Cincinnati et qui m'a dit que vous lui deviez 20,000 livres, je crois, plus ou moins. Je l'ai fort rassuré sur votre probité." (L'Enfant papers.)

<sup>12</sup> Only his orthography is corrected in the quotations. Orthography was not L'Enfant's strong point in any language. His mistakes are even worse in French than in English, the reason being, probably, that he took even less pains.



a universal trade, has his possessions respected, as well as his colors, by all the Powers at war. This may be said of a powerful nation, but this America is not to expect; a neutral Power must be ready for war, and his trade depends on the means of protecting and making his colors respected. America, neutral without [a] navy, without troops or fortified harbors could have nothing but calamity to expect." She cannot live free and develop in safety without "power to resent, ability to protect."

A noteworthy statement, to be sure, and which deserves to be remembered. L'Enfant draws, thereupon, a plan of defense, especially insisting, of course, on the importance of his own particular branch, namely engineering.<sup>13</sup>

Houdon's brief visit, shortly after, in order to make Washington's statue for the State of Virginia, must have been particularly pleasant to the major, to whom the great sculptor could bring news of his co-Academician, the old painter of the Gobelins Manufacture, father of the officer.

An unprinted letter of L'Enfant to the secretary of Congress, sitting then in New York, gives a number of details on Houdon's stay in America. The Federal Congress had thought of ordering, in its turn, a statue of Washington, which would have been an equestrian one; but what would the cost be? A most important question in those days. On behalf of Houdon, who knew no English, L'Enfant wrote to Charles Thomson that Mr. Houdon could not "properly hazard to give him any answer relating [to] the cost of the general's equestrian statue"; there are a great many ways of making such work, and Congress must say which it prefers. A book belonging to Mr. Houdon will shortly reach these shores, where particulars as to the "performance of the several statues which have been created in Europe are mentioned, together with their cost." The book is on a vessel, soon expected, and which brings back Doctor Franklin's "baggage."

Congress had thought also of a marble bust for the hall where it sat. Houdon was taking home with him a finished model of the head of the great man, and had exhibited it, for every one to say his say, in the "room of Congress."

<sup>13</sup> Unpublished, n. d., but of the end of 1784. (Papers of the Continental Congress—Letters, vol. LXXVIII, p. 583, Library of Congress.) His ambition would have been to be asked to realize his own plan, "as Brigadier-General Kosciusko, at leaving this continent, gave me the flattering expectation of being at the head of [such] a department."

Such busts, L'Enfant wrote, are "generally paid in Europe five thousand French livres"; but as many duplicates will probably be ordered from him, Houdon will lower the price to one hundred guineas. "He begs leave, however, to observe that a bust of the size of nature only may be fit for a private and small room, but not for such a large one as that devoted for the assembly of a Congress, where it should be necessary to have a bust of a larger size to have it appear to advantage."

The price had been asked, too, of duplicates in plaster of Paris, for private citizens. The answer was: four guineas, also in the thought that a goodly number would be wanted, "provided that there be a subscription for a large number, and that the gentlemen who will have any of these busts in their possession consider themselves as engaged to prevent any copy from being taken; this last condition he humbly insists upon."

As for the original, Houdon is anxious to know what the compatriots of the general think of it; any criticism would be welcome: "Mr. Houdon hopes that Congress is satisfied with the bust he has had the honor to submit to their examination, begs the gentlemen who may have some objections to communicate them to him, and he flatters himself that Congress will favor him with their opinion in writing, which he will consider as a proof of their satisfaction and keep as a testimony of their goodness."

He is just about to sail, and the bust has to be removed at once: "Mr. Houdon, being to embark to-morrow morning, begs leave to take out the general's bust from the room of Congress this afternoon."<sup>15</sup>

L'Enfant's chief work in New York consisted in the remodelling of the old, or rather older (but not oldest), City Hall, the one which preceded that now known, in its turn, as the old one. The undertaking was of importance, the question being of better accommodating Congress, which had left Philadelphia with a grudge toward that city, and was now sitting in New York. A large sum, for those days, had been advanced by patriotic citizens, which sum, however, L'Enfant's habit to see things "en grand" caused to be insufficient by more than half. The city hoped that the devising of such a structure would be for it one more title to be selected as the federal capital, and it therefore did not protest, but on the contrary caused a "testimonial" to be officially presented to L'Enfant, highly praising his work: "While the hall exists it will exhibit a most respectable monument of your eminent talents, as

<sup>15</sup> New York, 3d November, 1785. Papers of the Continental Congress—Letters, l. 78, vol. XIV, p. 677.

well as of the munificence of the citizens.”<sup>16</sup> L'Enfant received “the freedom of the city” by “special honorifick patent,” as he wrote later, and he was, moreover, offered ten acres of land near Provost Lane, “which latter he politely declined.”<sup>17</sup>

The building won general admiration for its noble appearance, the tasteful brilliancy of its ornamentation, and its commodious internal arrangements. The only objections came from the Anti-Federalists, who called it the “Fools’ Trap,” in which appellation politics had, obviously, more to do than architecture.

L'Enfant, a man of ideas, had tried to make of the renovated hall something characteristically American, if not in the general style, which was classical, at least in many details. National resources had been turned into use; in the Senate chamber the chimneys were of American marble, which, “for beauties of shade and polish, is equal to any of its kind in Europe.”<sup>18</sup> The capitals of the pilasters were “of a fanciful kind, the invention of Major L'Enfant, the architect. . . . Amidst their foliage appears a star and rays, and a piece of drapery below suspends a small medallion with U. S. in a cipher. The idea is new and the effect pleasing; and although they cannot be said to be of any ancient order, we must allow that they have an appearance of magnificence.”<sup>19</sup> The frieze outside was so divided as to give room for thirteen stars in so many metopes. A much-talked-of eagle, with thirteen arrows in its talons, which, unluckily, could not be ready for March 4, 1789, when Congress met in the hall for the first time under the newly voted Constitution, was the chief ornament on the pediment. On the 22d of April the news could be sent to the *Salem Mercury*: “The eagle in front of the Federal State-House is displayed. The general appearance of this front is truly august.”<sup>20</sup> The emblem was thus at its proper place when the chief event that Federal Hall, as it was then called, was to witness occurred, on the 30th of the same month, the day of the first inauguration of the first President of the United States.

Crowds came to visit what was then the most beautiful building in the country; but better than crowds came, and one visit was for the

<sup>16</sup> October 13, 1789.

<sup>17</sup> Taggart, *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, XI, 215.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas E. V. Smith, *The City of New York in 1789*, p. 46, quoting contemporary magazines.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> C. W. Bowen, *The Centennial Celebration of the Inauguration of George Washington*, 1892, pp. 15, 16.



major more touching and flattering than all the others put together—the wife of his general, now the President, Mrs. Washington, caused Colonel Humphreys and Mr. Lear to make arrangements with L'Enfant for her to inspect the hall, in June of the inauguration year.<sup>21</sup>

The expensive and greatly admired monument was to experience the strange fate of being survived by its author. Becoming again City Hall when Congress, soon after, left New York to go back, reconciled, to Philadelphia, it was pulled down in 1812, the building itself being sold at auction for four hundred and twenty-five dollars: and thus disappeared, to the regret of all lovers of ancient souvenirs, the beautiful chimneys in American marble, the “truly august” eagle with its thirteen arrows, and the first really American capitals ever devised, and which, though in a new style, were yet “magnificent.”

One solitary souvenir of the building remains, however, that is, the middle part of the railing on which Washington must have leaned when taking the oath; a piece of wrought iron of a fine ornamental style, now preserved with so many other interesting relics of old New York on the ground floor of the New York Historical Society's Museum. In the same room can be seen several contemporary views of Federal Hall, one in watercolor, by Robertson, 1798; another, an engraving, showing every detail of the façade, represents, as the inscription runs, “Federal Hall, the Seat of Congress.—Printed and sold by A. Doolittle, New Haven, 1790.—A. Doolittle Sc. Pet. Lacour del.

Shortly before the inauguration of the first President, L'Enfant had had to lend his help for the devising of a grand, artistic, historical, and especially political procession, a Federalist one, arranged in the hope of influencing public opinion and securing the vote of the Constitution by the State of New York. This now revered text was then the subject of ardent criticism; famous patriots like Patrick Henry had detected in it something royalistic, which has long ceased to be apparent, and were violent in their denunciation of this instrument of tyranny. New York was in doubt; its convention had met at Poughkeepsie in June, 1788, and it seemed as if an adverse vote were possible. The procession was then thought of.

It took place on Monday, the 23d of July, and was a grand affair, with artillery salute, trumpeters, foresters, Christopher Columbus on horseback, farmers, gardeners, the Society of the Cincinnati “in full

<sup>21</sup> “Mr. Lear does himself the honor to inform Major L'Enfant that Mrs. Washington intends to visit the federal building at six o'clock this evening.—Saturday morning, 13th June, 1789.” (L'Enfant papers.)

military uniform," brewers showing in their ranks, "mounted on a tun of ale, a beautiful boy of eight years, in close-fitting, flesh-colored silk, representing Bacchus, with a silver goblet in his hand," butchers, tanners, cordwainers "surrounding the car of the Sons of Saint Crispin," furriers exhibiting "an Indian in native costume, loaded with furs, notwithstanding it was one of the hottest days in July."<sup>22</sup>

The chief object of wonder was the good ship *Hamilton*, presented by the ship-carpenters, mounted on wheels, a perfect frigate of thirty-two guns, with its crew, complete, firing salutes on its way. The confectioners surrounded an immense "Federal cake." The judges and lawyers were followed by "John Lawrence, John Cozine, and Robert Troup, bearing the new Constitution elegantly engrossed on vellum, and ten students of law followed, bearing in order the ratification of the ten States."<sup>23</sup> The tin-plate workers exhibited "the Federal tin warehouse, raised on ten pillars, with the motto:

When three more pillars rise,  
Our Union will the world surprise."

—tin-plate poetry, for the tin warehouse. Then came learned men, physicians, clergymen, the regent and students of Columbia University, scholars, and among them Noah Webster, famous since as a lexicographer, and then as a professor and journalist, now admired by everybody, but, in those days of strife, only by Federalists—"a mere pedagogue," disdainfully wrote Jefferson later, "of very limited understanding and very strong prejudices," in saying which he himself, maybe, showed some prejudice, too.<sup>24</sup>

A grand banquet, at which, according to the *New York Journal and Weekly Register*,<sup>25</sup> bullocks were roasted whole for the "regale" of the guests, was held at the extreme point reached by the procession, called by the same paper the "parade des fêtes champêtres." The President and members of Congress sat under a dome devised by L'Enfant. It was "surmounted by a figure of Fame, with a trumpet proclaiming a new era, and holding a scroll emblematic of the three great epochs of the war: *Independence—Alliance with France—Peace.*"<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Martha J. Lamb, *History of the City of New York*, 1881, vol. II, pp. 321 ff.

<sup>23</sup> Ten had already voted the Constitution, which made its enactment certain, for Congress had decided that an adoption by nine States would be enough for that. As is well known, there remained in the end only two dissenting States, North Carolina and Rhode Island.

<sup>24</sup> To James Madison, August 12, 1801.

<sup>25</sup> Number of July 24, 1788.

<sup>26</sup> Martha J. Lamb, *ibid.*

This was greatly admired. "The committee," we read in a note printed by their order in the *Imperial Gazetteer*, "would be insensible of the zeal and merit of Major L'Enfant were they to omit expressing the obligation which they are under to him for the elegance of the design and the excellence of the execution of the pavilion and tables."<sup>27</sup>

The whole was a considerable success. "As it redounds much to the credit of the citizens, . . ." another paper observes, "it ought to be remarked that there was not the least outrage, or even indecency, notwithstanding 6,000 or 7,000 people (as supposed, spectators included) had collected, and that the whole company was dismissed at half after five o'clock."<sup>28</sup>

Three days after the procession the vote was taken at Poughkeepsie, and if *any* influence at all could be attributed to the effect on public opinion of the quasi-mediæval pageant, its organizers must have felt proud, for in an assembly of fifty-seven the Constitution was actually voted by a majority of two.

### III

The same year in which the New York Federal Hall had seen the inauguration of the first President, the chance of his life came to L'Enfant. He deserved it, because he not only availed himself of it, but went forth to meet it, giving up his abode in New York, "where I stood at the time," he wrote later, "able of commanding whatever business I liked." This was the founding of the federal city.

The impression was a general one among the French that those insurgents whom they had helped to become a free nation were to be a great one, too. Leaving England, where he was a refugee during our Revolution, Talleyrand decided to come to the United States, "desirous of seeing," he says in his memoirs, "that great country whose history begins." General Moreau, also a refugee, a few years later spoke with the same confidence of the future of the country: "I had pictured to myself the advantages of living under a free government; but I had conceived only in part what such happiness is: here it is enjoyed to the full. . . . It is impossible for men who have lived under such a government to allow themselves ever to be subjugated; they would be

<sup>27</sup> July 26, 1788.

<sup>28</sup> *New York Journal*, July 24.



very great cowards if they did not perish to the last in order to defend it." <sup>29</sup>

L'Enfant, with his tendency to see things "en grand," could not fail to act accordingly, and the moment he heard that the federal city would be neither New York nor Philadelphia, nor any other already in existence, but one to be built expressly, he wrote to Washington a letter remarkable by his clear understanding of the opportunity offered to the country, and by his determined purpose to work not for the three million inhabitants of his day, but for the one hundred of ours, and for all the unborn millions that will come after us.

The letter is dated from New York, 11th of September, 1789. "Sir," he said, "the late determination of Congress to lay the foundation of a city which is to become the capital of this vast empire offers so great an occasion of acquiring reputation to whoever may be appointed to conduct the execution of the business that your Excellency will not be surprised that my ambition and the desire I have of becoming a useful citizen should lead me to wish a share in the undertaking.

"No nation, perhaps, had ever before the opportunity offered them of deliberately deciding on the spot where their capital should be fixed. . . . And, although the means now within the power of the country are not such as to pursue the design to any great extent, it will be obvious that the plan should be drawn on such a scale as to leave room for that aggrandizement and embellishment which the increase of the wealth of the nation will permit it to pursue at any period, however remote. Viewing the matter in this light, I am fully sensible of the extent of the undertaking." <sup>30</sup>

Washington knew that L'Enfant was afflicted, to be sure, with an "untoward" temper, being haughty, proud, intractable, but that he was honest withal, sincere, loyal, full of ideas, and remarkably gifted. He decided to intrust him with the great task, thus justifying, a little later, his selection: "Since my first knowledge of the gentleman's abilities in the line of his profession, I have received him not only as a scientific man, but one who has added considerable taste to professional knowledge; and that, for such employment as he is now engaged

<sup>29</sup> To his brother, Philadelphia, November 17, 1806. *Revue des Deux Mondes*, November 15, 1908, p. 421.

<sup>30</sup> Original (several times printed in part) in the Library of Congress, *Miscellaneous—Personal*. The rest of the letter treats of the necessity of fortifying the coasts.

in, for prosecuting public works and carrying them into effect, he was better qualified than any one who had come within my knowledge in this country.”<sup>31</sup> The President informed L’Enfant that he was to set to work at once, and so bestir himself as to have at least a general plan to show a few months later, when he himself would return from a trip South. On March 2, 1791, Washington announced to Colonel Dickens, of Georgetown, the coming of the major: “An eminent French military engineer starts for Georgetown to examine and survey the site of the federal city.” A few days later the arrival of “Major Longfont” was duly recorded by the *Georgetown Weekly Ledger*.<sup>32</sup>

L’Enfant’s enthusiasm and his desire to do well and quickly had been raised to a high pitch. He reached the place a few days later and found it wrapped in mist, soaked in rain, but he would not wait. “I see no other way,” he wrote to Jefferson on the 11th, “if by Monday next the weather does not change, but of making a rough draft as accurate as may be obtained by viewing the ground in riding over it on horseback, as I have already done yesterday through the rain, to obtain a knowledge of the whole. . . . As far as I was able to judge through a thick fog, I passed on many spots which appeared to me really beautiful, and which seem to dispute with each other [which] commands.”<sup>33</sup>

When he could see the place to better advantage, his admiration knew no bounds. In an unpublished letter to Hamilton he says: “Now, when you may probably have heard that I am finally charged with delineating a plan for the city, I feel a sort of embarrassment how to speak to you as advantageously as I really think of the situation determined upon; for, as there is no doubt, I must feel highly interested in the success of the undertaking, I become apprehensive of being charged with partiality when I assure you that no position in America can be more susceptible of grand improvement than that between the eastern branch of the Potomac and Georgetown.”<sup>34</sup>

A few weeks later L’Enfant was doing the honors of the spot to a brother artist, the painter Trumbull, just back from Yorktown, where he had been sketching in view of his big picture of the surrendering of Cornwallis, and who wrote in his autobiography: “Then to Georgetown, where I found Major L’Enfant drawing his plan of the city of

<sup>31</sup> To David Stuart, November 20, 1791.

<sup>32</sup> W. B. Bryan’s *History of the National Capital*, 1914, p. 127.

<sup>33</sup> *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, II, 151.

<sup>34</sup> April 8, 1791. Hamilton Papers, vol. XI, Library of Congress.

Washington; rode with him over the ground on which the city has since been built. Where the Capitol now stands was then a thick wood." (May, 1791.)

Another visitor of note came in the same year, namely the French minister, a former companion in arms of Lafayette and of L'Enfant himself, Ternant, back from a three days' stay at Mount Vernon, and who gave his government an account of what he had observed: "I would not leave Georgetown without having seen the ground destined for the federal city. The position seemed to me a most interesting one from every point of view. The French engineer who has already traced the streets, is busy preparing a detailed plan. . . . The President shows the greatest interest in this new Salente, which is to bear his name."<sup>35</sup>

The city, L'Enfant thought, must be great, beautiful, and soon peopled, drawn "on that grand scale on which it ought to be planned";<sup>36</sup> meant to absorb "Georgetown itself, whose name will before long be suppressed, and its whole district become a part of the cession."<sup>37</sup> It must be quickly filled with inhabitants, because this will strengthen the Union: "I earnestly wish all that the Eastern States can spare may come this way, and believe it would answer as good a purpose as that of their emigration to the West. It would deface that line of markation which will ever oppose the South against the East, for when objects are seen at a distance the idea we form of them is apt to mislead us . . . and we fancy monstrous that object which, from a nearer view, would charm us. . . . Hence arises a natural though unwarrantable prejudice of nations against nations, of States against States, and so down to individuals, who often mistrust one another for want of being sufficiently acquainted with each other."<sup>38</sup>

The city must be beautiful, due advantage being taken of the hilly nature of the spot for grand or lovely prospects, and of its water resources for handsome fountains and cascades: "five grand fountains intended, with a constant spout of water—a grand cascade" at the foot of Capitol Hill,<sup>39</sup> etc., a part of the plan which was, unluckily, left in

<sup>35</sup> September 30, October 24, 1791. *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, ed. F. J. Turner, 1904, p. 62. "Salente," the ideal city, in Fénelon's *Télémaque*. During the War of Independence Chevalier Jean de Ternant had served as a volunteer officer in the American army. He was at Valley Forge, at Charleston, took part under Greene in the Southern campaign and was promoted a colonel by a vote of Congress.

<sup>36</sup> To Jefferson, March 11, 1791.

<sup>37</sup> To Hamilton, April 8, 1791.

<sup>38</sup> Same letter to Hamilton.

<sup>39</sup> L'Enfant's *Observations Explanatory of the Plan*, inscribed on the plan itself.



abeyance. Some had spoken of a plain rectangular plan, "a regular assemblage of houses laid out in squares, and forming streets all parallel and uniform." This might be good enough, L'Enfant declared, "on a well-level plain, where, no surrounding object being interesting, it becomes indifferent which way the opening street may be directed." But the case is quite different with the future federal city: "Such regular plans, however answerable they may appear on paper . . . become at last tiresome and insipid, and it could never be, in its origin, but a mean continence of some cool imagination wanting a sense of the really grand and truly beautiful, only to be met with where nature contributes with art and diversifies the objects."<sup>40</sup> We may imagine what his feelings would be if he saw, in our days, the steam-shovel busy around the city, dumping as many hills as possible into as many vales, and securing a maximum platitude.

But the city must be more than that; besides being beautiful, healthy, commodious, it should be full of sentiment, of associations, of ideas; everything in it must be evocative and have a meaning and a "*raison d'être*." Rarely was a brain more busy than that of L'Enfant during the first half of the year 1791. Surveying the ground, mapping out the district, sketching the chief buildings of the model city that was to be<sup>41</sup> he presented three reports to Washington, the first, giving only his general ideas, before the end of March, the second in June, the last in August, the two latter accompanied with plans, the last of which being the one which was followed in the building of the city.

By the amplitude of its scope, the logic of the arrangements, the breadth of the streets and avenues, the beauty of the prospects cleverly taken into account, the quantity of ground set apart for gardens and parks, the display of waters, the plan was a unique monument. The selection of the place for what we call the Capitol and the White House, which were then called the Federal House and the Palace for the President, near which the ministerial departments were to be built, had been the result of a good deal of thinking and comparing. "After much menutial [*sic*] search for an eligible situation, prompted, as I may say,

<sup>40</sup> First report to the President, March 26, 1791.

<sup>41</sup> For he was depended upon for that, too: "M. L'Enfant," Ternant wrote, "aura aussi la direction des bâtimens que le Congrès se propose d'y faire élever." September 30, 1791. See also the documents quoted by W. B. Bryan, *History of the National Capital*, 1914, p. 165, note. L'Enfant actually made drawings for the Capitol, the President's house, the bridges, the market, etc., which he complained later the commissioners to have unjustly appropriated. *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, II, 140.

from a fear of being prejudiced in favor of a first opinion, I could discover no one so advantageously to greet the congressional building as is that on the west end of Jenkins heights, which stands as a pedestal waiting for a monument. . . . Some might, perhaps, require less labor to be made agreeable, but, after all assistance of arts, none ever would be made so grand." On that very pedestal now rises the Capitol of the United States.

As for the "Presidential Palace," L'Enfant made his choice with the object, he says, of "adding to the sumptuousness of a palace the convenience of a house and the agreeableness of a country seat," which are the three main qualities actually combined in the present White House. He selected a spot which Washington had himself noticed as a convenient one, at some distance from Congress, it is true, but that would not matter much, L'Enfant thought, with his old-world notions of etiquette, for "no message to nor from the President is to be made without a sort of decorum which will doubtless point out the propriety of committee waiting on him in carriage, should his palace be even contiguous to Congress." Since it was a question of driving, it little mattered whether the drive was to be a little more or less long.

For different reasons President Washington approved of that distance; *major e longinquo amicitia*, he apparently thought. "Where and how," he once wrote to Alexander White, "the houses for the President and other public officers may be fixed is to me as an individual a matter of moonshine, but . . . the daily intercourse which the secretaries of the departments must have with the President would render a distant situation extremely inconvenient to them; and not much less so would one be close to the Capitol, for it was the universal complaint of them all, that while the legislature was in session they could do little or no business, so much were they interrupted by the individual visits of members (in office hours) and by calls for papers. Many of them have declared to me that they have often been obliged to go home and deny themselves in order to transact the current business."<sup>42</sup> In that respect, carriage or no carriage, distance would have its merits.

L'Enfant's letters and the notes accompanying his plans show that everything in the future city had been devised, indeed, with an intention: ever-flowing fountains and a cascade for health and beauty; an avenue of noble buildings, leading from the Capitol to the Presidential House, and increasing the dignified appearance of both: "The grand

<sup>42</sup> March 25, 1798.

avenue," he wrote, "connecting both the Palace and the Federal House will be most magnificent and most convenient," with a number of handsome monuments, a very characteristic one being a temple for national semireligious celebrations, "such as public prayer, thanksgivings, funeral orations, etc., and assigned to the special use of no particular sect or denomination, but equally opened to all." It would also be a pantheon for the illustrious dead, "as may hereafter be decreed by the voice of a grateful nation." A column, as yet never built, was "to be erected to celebrate the first rise of a navy, and to stand a ready monument to consecrate its progress and achievements." The squares were to be allotted, one to each of the States forming the Union: "The centre of each square will admit of statues, columns, obelisks, or any other ornament . . . to perpetuate not only the memory of such individuals whose counsels or military achievements were conspicuous in giving liberty and independence to this country, but also those whose usefulness hath rendered them worthy of general imitation, to invite the youth of succeeding generations to tread in the paths of those sages or heroes whom their country has thought proper to celebrate." This was a way, L'Enfant considered, of fortifying the Union and of giving to the very city that educational value to which he attached so much importance.

Chief among those patriotic objects was to be, at some distance north of the place where the Washington monument now rises, "the equestrian figure of George Washington, a monument voted in 1783 by the late Continental Congress." And L'Enfant must certainly have hoped that the author would be his illustrious compatriot, the sculptor Houdon, on whose behalf we have seen him writing to Congress, in 1785, as to the probable cost.

Distant views and prospects were, of course, to be used to the best advantage: "Attention has been paid to the passing of those leading avenues over the most favorable ground for prospect and convenience." But, above all, L'Enfant was persistent in his request that, on no account, the grandeur of his conception be in any way curtailed: it was to remain commensurate with the greatness of the United States of future times. The plan "must leave to posterity a grand idea of the patriotic interest which promoted it."<sup>43</sup> He foresaw much opposition to some of his ideas, but besought the President to stand by him, and especially to prevent any dwarfing of his views: "I remain assured you will conceive it essential to pursue with dignity the operation of an un-

<sup>43</sup> L'Enfant's *Observations Explanatory of the Plan*, inscribed on it.



dertaking of a magnitude so worthy of the concern of a grand empire . . . over whose progress the eyes of every other nation, envying the opportunity denied them, will stand judge.”<sup>44</sup>

To make a man of that temper and enthusiasm, having a reason for each of his propositions, accept hints and change his mind was almost an impossibility. In vain did Jefferson object “to the obligation to build the houses at a given distance from the street. . . . It produces a disgusting monotony; all persons make this complaint against Philadelphia.” In the same record of his views, however, and much more to his credit, Washington’s secretary of state is seen foreseeing the skyscraper and its dangers: “In Paris it is forbidden to build a house beyond a given height, and it is admitted to be a good restriction. It keeps down the price of grounds, keeps the houses low and convenient, and the streets light and airy. Fires are much more manageable when houses are low,”<sup>45</sup> as was only too well evidenced since in the fires at Chicago, Baltimore, and San Francisco.

As for the President himself, he had well-determined, practical ideas on some points, such as the befitting distance between the places of abode of Congress and of the chief of the state, and, what was of more import, the necessarily large extent of the ground to be reserved for the building of the future capital.<sup>46</sup> On the rest, with his habit of trusting those who knew, he seems to have left free rein to L’Enfant. Submitting to him certain suggestions, some from Jefferson, he allows him to use them or not, as he pleases, and he personally seems to incline toward not: “Sir, although I do not conceive that you will derive any material advantage from an examination of the inclosed papers, yet, as they have been drawn under different circumstances and by different persons, they may be compared with your own ideas of a proper plan for the federal city. . . . The rough sketch by Mr. Jefferson was done under an idea that no offer worthy of consideration would come from the landholders in

<sup>44</sup> Conclusion of his third report.

<sup>45</sup> “Opinion on Capital,” November 29, 1790. *Writings*, ed. Ford, V. 253.

<sup>46</sup> Which agreed perfectly with L’Enfant’s constant desire to ever do things “en grand.” Washington writes to him that, “although it may not be *immediately* wanting,” a large tract of ground must be reserved. The lands to be set apart, “in my opinion are those between Rock Creek, the Potowmac River, and the Eastern Branch, and as far up the latter as the turn of the channel above Evens’s point; thence including the flat back of Jenkins’s height; thence to the road leading from Georgetown to Bladensburg as far easterly along the same as to include the Branch which runs across it, somewhere near the exterior of the Georgetown Session. Thence in a proper direction to Rock Creek at or above the ford, according to the situation of ground.” Mount Vernon, April 4, 1791, Washington’s manuscript *Letter Book*, vol. XI, Library of Congress.

the vicinity of Carrollsburg, from the backwardness which appeared in them, and therefore was accommodated to the grounds about Georgetown.”<sup>47</sup>

Criticism of L’Enfant’s plan turned out to be insignificant, and the approbation general. “The work of Major L’Enfant, which is greatly admired, will show,” Washington said, “that he had many objects to attend to and to combine, not on paper merely, but to make them correspond with the actual circumstances of the ground.”<sup>48</sup> Jefferson, who had the good taste not to stick to his own former suggestions, was sending, a little later, copies of the plan to Gouverneur Morris, then minister to France, for him to exhibit in various cities as a thing for the United States to be proud of: “I sent you by the way of London a dozen plans of the city of Washington in the Federal territory, hoping you would have them displayed to public view where they would be most seen by those descriptions of men worthy and likely to be attracted to it. Paris, Lyons, Rouen, and the seaport towns of Havre, Nantes, Bordeaux, and Marseille would be proper places to send them to.”<sup>49</sup>

Three assistants had been given to L’Enfant, two of the Ellicot brothers (Andrew and Benjamin) and Isaac Roberdeau, the major’s trustiest second. Three Commissioners of the District had been appointed, Thomas Johnson and Daniel Carroll, both of Maryland, and David Stuart, of Virginia. They notified L’Enfant, on the 9th of September, 1791, that a name had been selected for the district and the city: “We have agreed that the federal district shall be called ‘the Territory of Columbia,’ and the federal city ‘the City of Washington.’ The title of the map will therefore be ‘A map of the City of Washington in the District of Columbia.’”

For the expropriation of the ground with a minimum actual outlay, an ingenious system, also applied elsewhere, had been adopted: “The terms entered into by me,” Washington wrote to Jefferson “on the part of the United States with the landowners of Georgetown and Carrollsburgh, are that all the land from Rock Creek along the river to the Eastern Branch . . . is ceded to the public, on condition that, when the whole shall be surveyed and laid off as a city, which Major L’Enfant is now directed to do, the present proprietors shall retain every other lot, and for such parts of the land as may be taken for public use they shall be allowed at the rate of twenty-five pounds per acre, the public having the right to reserve such parts of the wood on the land as may be thought

<sup>47</sup> Same letter.

<sup>48</sup> To the Commissioners, December 18, 1791.

<sup>49</sup> Philadelphia, March 12, 1793.

necessary to be preserved for ornament; the landholders to have the use and profit of all the grounds until the city is laid off into lots, which by this agreement became public property. Nothing is to be allowed for the ground which may be occupied as streets or alleys." The President was confident that everybody would acquiesce and show good-will, "even the obstinate Mr. Burns."<sup>50</sup>

But it turned out that there were other obstinate people besides Mr. Burns, L'Enfant himself chief among them. He had evinced from the first a great fear of speculators, and was at once at war with them. "How far," he boldly wrote to Hamilton, "I have contributed to over-set that plotting business, it would not do for me to tell; besides, I am not wholly satisfied whether I would be thanked for by the people among whom you live."<sup>51</sup> The three Commissioners had notions of their own, but could never bring L'Enfant to take into account either their persons or their ideas; he would acknowledge no chief except Washington, who, gently at first, firmly afterward, sternly later, and vainly throughout, tried to make the major understand that he was one of the Commissioners' subordinates. A great reciprocal irritation, which even the President's painstaking diplomacy could not assuage, began between them from the first. Out of fear of speculators, L'Enfant wanted the sale of the lots to be delayed, while the Commissioners desired to make a beginning as soon as possible. The officer kept, accordingly, his plan to himself, and refused to have it shown to would-be purchasers. How, then, Washington exclaimed, could they be "induced to buy, to borrow an old adage, a *pig in a poke*"?<sup>52</sup>

The major would not be persuaded, and, giving an early example of an unconquerable fear of what would now be called a "trust," he persisted in refusing to show his plan to any individual or association. He had declared beforehand, in one of his reports to the President, what were his views and how things should be delayed until the plan could be engraved, distributed all over the country, and made known to all people at the same time: "A sale made previous the general plan of the distribution of the city is made public, and before the circumstance of that sale taking place has had time to be known through the whole continent, will not call a sufficient concurrence, and must be confined to a few individuals speculating . . . and the consequence of a low sale in this first instance may prove injurious to the subsequent ones by

<sup>50</sup> March 31, 1791.

<sup>51</sup> April 8, 1791. Hamilton papers, vol. XI.

<sup>52</sup> To David Stuart, November 20, 1791.



serving as precedents." He was afraid of the "plotting of a number of certain designing men," of the forming of a "society" organized "to engross the most of the sale and master the whole business,"<sup>53</sup>

When one of the chief landowners of the district, Daniel Carroll, of Duddington, a relative of one of the Commissioners, decided, in spite of all warnings, to go on with the building of a house across what was to be New Jersey Avenue, matters came to a crisis. Washington tried to pacify L'Enfant, whose indignation knew no bounds. "As a similar case," he wrote to him, "cannot happen again (Mr. Carroll's house having been begun before the federal district was fixed upon), no precedent will be established by yielding a little in the present instance; and it will always be found sound policy to conciliate the good-will rather than provoke the enmity of any man, where it can be accomplished without much difficulty, inconvenience, or loss."

But even at the request of a leader whom he worshipped, L'Enfant would not be persuaded. With no authority from the Commissioners, he sent his faithful Roberdeau to raze the house to the ground, which was but partly done when the Commissioners had Roberdeau arrested. L'Enfant thereupon came in person with some laborers, and saw the work of destruction perfected (November 22). He barely escaped arrest himself. Washington, who, as he wrote to Jefferson, was loath to lose "his services, which in my opinion would be a serious misfortune," severely remonstrated now with the major. "In future I must strictly enjoin you to touch no man's property without his consent, or the previous order of the Commissioners," adding in kindlier tones: "Having the beauty and regularity of your plan only in view, you pursue it as if every person or thing were obliged to yield to it."<sup>54</sup>

But so they are, thought L'Enfant. For him the city was his city, his child, and a father has a right to rear his child as he pleases. Remonstrating went on some time. Jefferson came to the rescue of the President, used the fairest means, asked the major to dine with him "tête à tête," so as to quietly discuss the federal city, the hour for the meal differing rather widely from ours: "Mr. Jefferson presents his compliments to Major L'Enfant, and is sorry to have been absent when he was so kind as to call on him, as he wishes to have some conversation with him on the subject of the federal city. He asks the favor of him to come and take a private dinner with him tomorrow at half after three, which may afford time and opportunity for the purpose.—Saturday, January

<sup>53</sup> Report to the President, August 19, 1791.

<sup>54</sup> December 2, 1791.

7, 1792.”<sup>55</sup> Nothing resulted. Another landowner, Notley Young, had been found in December building a house which had, “contrary to expectation, fallen into a principal street. But I hope,” Washington wrote the Commissioners, “the major does not mean to proceed to the demolition of this also.”

On no point would L'Enfant yield, so that on March 6, 1792, Jefferson wrote to the Commissioners: “It having been found impracticable to employ Major L'Enfant in that degree of subordination which was lawful and proper, he has been notified that his services were at an end.”

A consolation and a comfort to him was the immediate signing by all the landowners of the district, except two, of a testimonial “lamenting” his departure, wishing for his return, praising his work, “for we well know that your time and the whole powers of your mind have been for months entirely devoted to the arrangements in the city which reflect so much honor on your taste and judgment.”<sup>56</sup>

#### IV

The bright part of L'Enfant's life was over. His fame was great, and appeals continued for some time to be made to him when important works were contemplated. But his same tendency to ever see things “en grand,” his unyielding disposition, his increasing and almost morbid fear of speculators wrecked more than one of his undertakings.

Almost on his leaving his work at Washington he was asked to draw the plans of the first manufacturing city, devised as such, in the United States, and which is to-day one of the most important in existence, Paterson, N. J. “Major L'Enfant, it is said,” wrote Washington, who still retained a friendly feeling for him, “is performing wonders at the new town of Paterson.”<sup>57</sup> The moving spirit was Hamilton, under whose influence had been founded the “Society for the Establishing Useful Manufactures.” The chief point was to transform into a city a spot where only ten houses were in existence, and to make of it an industrial one by turning into use the Falls of the Passaic. Several letters of the major to Hamilton, giving an account of the work, in which faithful Roberdeau was helping, and of the increasing difficulties with all sorts of people, are preserved in the Library of Congress. After one

<sup>55</sup> L'Enfant papers.

<sup>56</sup> March 9, 1792. *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, II, 137.

<sup>57</sup> To the Commissioners, November 30, 1792.

year's toil, L'Enfant was once more notified that his services were no longer wanted.

He is found in the same year and the following one working as an engineer at Fort Mifflin, on the Delaware, and as an architect at a mansion in Philadelphia which was to surpass in magnificence any other in the States. It had been ordered of him by Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolution, and the richest man in America.<sup>58</sup> Here was, if ever, an occasion to do things "en grand." L'Enfant, however, did them "en plus grand" than even the financier had dreamed; improvements and afterthoughts, the use of marble for columns and façades increased the delay and expense. His being busy at Paterson had also been at first another cause of complaint. "Dear Sir," Morris beseechingly wrote him from Philadelphia, "I had like to have stopped my house for fear of wanting money; that difficulty being removed, it will now be stopped for want of Major L'Enfant."<sup>59</sup> The roof had at last been put on, and one could judge of the beauty of the ensemble, quite remarkable, as we can see from a sketch by Birch the Elder preserved in the Philadelphia Library, when Morris's catastrophe occurred, putting an end to the work, and swallowing part, if not all, of L'Enfant's savings.<sup>60</sup>

In his delight at being intrusted with the plan of the federal city he had never said a word about any remuneration, and he had not copyrighted his plan. At the time of his dismissal Washington had written to the Commissioners: "The plan of the city having met universal applause (as far as my information goes), and Major L'Enfant having become a very discontented man, it was thought that less than from two thousand five hundred to three thousand dollars, would not be proper to offer him for his services; instead of this, suppose five hundred guineas and a lot in a good part of the city were substituted?"

The offer was made; L'Enfant refused, without giving reasons. More and more gloomy times were in store for him; mishaps and disappointments multiplied. He had laid great store on the selling of copies of his plan, but since he had not copyrighted it, no royalty on the sale was reserved for him. He protested against this, against the way in which

<sup>58</sup> Morris had bought for it a whole block, limited on its four sides by Chestnut, Walnut, Seventh, and Eighth Streets.

<sup>59</sup> May 9, 1793. (L'Enfant papers.)

<sup>60</sup> He seems to have tried to help the financier rather than to be helped by him. Ill-satisfied as he was with the house, for which he, apparently, never paid L'Enfant anything, Morris wrote: "But he lent me thirteen shares of bank stock disinterestedly, and on this point I feel the greatest anxiety that he should get the same number of shares with the dividends, for the want of which he has suffered great distress." Written about 1800. W. B. Bryan, *History of the National Capital*, 1914, p. 181.



the engraving had been made, with grievous "errors of execution," and against the suppression of his name on it, "depriving me of the repute of the projector." Contrary, however, to the fear expressed at first by Washington, that out of spite he might, in his discontent, side with the many who disapproved of the vast and difficult undertaking, he remained loyal to it, and "there is no record of any act or word that tarnishes his life history with the blemish of disloyalty to the creation of his genius. He bore his honors and disappointments in humility and poverty."<sup>61</sup>

Poverty was, indeed, at his door, and soon in his house. Haunted by the notion of his wrongs, some only too real, some more or less imaginary, he sent to Congress memoir after memoir, recalling what he had done, and what was his destitution, the "absolute destruction of his family's fortune in Europe," owing to the French Revolution, his being reduced "from a state of ease and content to one the most distressed and helpless," living as he did, upon "borrowed bread"; but he would not doubt of "the magnanimity and justice of Congress."<sup>62</sup>

The family's fortune had been reduced, indeed, to a low ebb, his own lack of attention to his financial affairs making matters worse. His inability to properly attend to them is only too well evidenced by some letters from French relatives, showing that, while he was himself in absolute want, he neglected to receive the pension bestowed on him by the French Government, and which, in spite of the Revolution, had been maintained. He had also inherited from the old painter, his father, a small farm in Normandy, but had taken no steps about it, so that the farmer never ceased to pocket the revenues.<sup>63</sup>

One of these letters, which tells him of the death of his mother, who "died with the piety of an angel," shows what reports reached France as to the major's standing among his American friends: "All the persons whom I have seen and who know you, assured me that you enjoyed public esteem. This is everything in a country of which people praise the morals, the virtues, and the probity as worthy of our first ancestors."<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> S. C. Busey, *Pictures of the City of Washington in the Past*, 1898, p. 108.

<sup>62</sup> Memoirs of 1801, 1802, 1813, in the Jefferson papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>63</sup> Letter from his cousin, Destouches, Paris, September 15, 1805, greatly exaggerating, as shown by the letter mentioned below, his mother's state of poverty. (L'Enfant papers.)

<sup>64</sup> From his cousin, Mrs. Roland, née Mallet, whose husband had a modest position at the Ministry of the Navy; Paris, May 5, 1806. The mother's furniture and silver plate was valued at 1,500 livres. Allusion is made to L'Enfant's deceased sister and to her "marriage projeté avec Mr. Leclerc." (L'Enfant papers.)

On two occasions, after many years, Congress voted modest sums for L'Enfant, but they were at once appropriated by his creditors. He was, moreover, appointed, in 1812, "professor of the art of military engineering in the Military Academy of the United States," a nomination which, in spite of the entreaties of James Monroe, then secretary of state, he declined. He is found in September, 1814, working at Fort Washington, when fifty men with spades and axes are sent him.

He survived eleven years, haunting the lobbies of the Capitol, pacing the newly marked avenues of "his" city, watching its growth, deploring the slightest deviation from his original design, for, as Washington had early noticed, he was "so tenacious of his plans as to conceive that they would be marred if they underwent any change or alteration,"<sup>65</sup> visiting the friends he had among the early settlers. "Mr. W. W. Corcoran, who lately departed this life in the city of Washington, full of years and honor . . . had a very distinct recollection of the personal appearance of L'Enfant, the latter having been a frequent visitor at his father's house. He described him to me as a tall, erect man, fully six feet in height, finely proportioned, nose prominent, of military bearing, courtly air, and polite manners, his figure usually enveloped in a long overcoat and surmounted by a bell-crowned hat—a man who would attract attention in any assembly."<sup>66</sup>

He ended his days, the permanent guest of the Digges family, in their house near Washington. His death occurred there in 1825, and he was buried in their property at the foot of a tree. An inventory of his "personal goods and chattels" showed that they consisted in three watches, three compasses, some books, maps, and surveying instruments, the whole being valued at forty-six dollars.

The federal city, Washington had written in 1798 to Mrs. Sarah Fairfax, then in England, will be a great and beautiful one "a century hence, if this country keeps united, and it is surely its policy and interest to do it." It took, indeed, a great many years, and for a long time doubters could enjoy their doubts, and jokers their jokes. The Duke de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt visited the incipient town in 1797; he found that it possessed one hundred and fifty houses, scattered here and there; the house for the President was ready to be covered the same year, and the only wing of the Capitol yet begun was to receive its roof the year following, both being "handsome buildings, in white stones very

<sup>65</sup> To David Stuart November 20, 1791.

<sup>66</sup> Hugh T. Taggart, in *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, XI, 216.

well wrought." But the unredeemable fault, in his eyes, was the very magnitude and beauty of the plan. "The plan," he wrote, "is fine, cleverly and grandly designed, but it is its very grandeur, its magnificence, which causes it to be nothing but a dream." The distance, so heartily approved of by Washington, between the President's house and the Capitol, seemed to the traveller a serious objection; the raising of five hundred houses would be necessary to connect the two buildings; not one is in existence. "If this gap is not filled, communication will be impracticable in winter, for one can scarcely suppose that the United States would undergo the expense for pavement, footpaths, and lamps for such a long stretch of uninhabited ground."<sup>67</sup> This wonder has, however, been seen.

For a long time, for more than half the present duration of the city's life, deriders could deride to their heart's content. Few cities have ever been so abundantly nicknamed as Washington, the "wilderness city," the city "of magnificent distances," the "village monumental," the city, as reported by Jean-Jacques Ampère, the son of the great scientist, who visited it in 1851, of "streets without houses, and of houses without streets." He saw in its fate "a striking proof of this truth that one cannot create a great city at will." But this truth, as some others, has proved an untruth.

The growth was slow, indeed, but constant, and when the century was over, Washington's prophecy and L'Enfant's foresight were justified by the event. A city had risen, ample and beautiful, a proper capital for a wealthy and powerful nation, one quite apart, copied on no other, "not one of those cities," as was remarked, in our days, by one of Washington's successors, Mr. Roosevelt, "of which you can cut out a piece and transplant it into another, without any one perceiving that something has happened."

Then at last came L'Enfant's day. What he had always expected for "his" city took place; what he had never expected for himself took place also. In January, 1902, both the "Park Commission," composed of Daniel H. Burnham, Charles F. McKim, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and F. L. Olmsted, and the Senate committee presented their reports on the improvement and development of Washington; the conclusions were: "The original plan of the city of Washington, having stood the test of a century, has met universal approval. The departures from that plan are to be regretted, and wherever possible, remedied." It was thus re-

<sup>67</sup> *Voyage en Amérique*, VI, 122 ff.



solved to revert, as much as circumstances allowed, and in spite of a heavy outlay, to several of L'Enfant's ideas, especially to one which he considered of greatest importance, and which had been kept so long in abeyance, the giving of its proper character to that "grand avenue" between the Capitol and the White House, meant to be "most magnificent and most convenient." It is now going to be both.

As for L'Enfant himself, one more appropriation, this time not to go to his creditors, was voted by Congress on account of the major, and it was resolved that his ashes, the place of which continued to be marked only by a tree, should be removed to Arlington National Cemetery, to lie in that ever-growing army of the dead, former members of the regiments of that Republic for which he had fought and bled. His remains were brought to what had been "Jenkins's Hill," and placed under the great dome of the Capitol. In the presence of the chief of the state, President Taft, of representatives of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Society of the Cincinnati, and other patriotic and artistic societies, and of a vast crowd, on the 28th of April, 1909, orations were delivered by the Vice-President of the United States, James Sherman, and by the Chief Commissioner of the District, Henry B. McFarland, the latter amply making up, by his friendly and eloquent address, for the long-forgotten troubles of his predecessors with L'Enfant. The Vice-President courteously concluded thus: "And turning to you, Mr. Ambassador . . . I express the hope that the friendship between our nations, which has existed for more than a century, will be but intensified as time passes, and that we will in the future join hands in advancing every good cause which an all-wise Providence intrusts to our care." The hearse, wrapped in the three colors of France and America, was accompanied to Arlington by the French naval and military attachés, and an escort from one of those regiments of engineers to which the major himself had belonged.

A handsome monument was unveiled two years later by Miss E. C. Morgan, the great-granddaughter of William Digges, who had befriended L'Enfant in his last days, the chief speeches being delivered by President Taft, and by secretary of state, Elihu Root.<sup>68</sup> "Few men," Mr. Root said, "can afford to wait a hundred years to be remembered. It is not a change in L'Enfant that brings us here. It is we who have changed, who have just become able to appreciate his work. And our tribute to him should be to continue his work." The monument, by W. W. Bosworth, who, like L'Enfant had received in Paris his artistic

<sup>68</sup> May 22, 1911.

education, is in the shape of a table, on which has been engraved a facsimile of the original plan of the city by the French soldier-artist. From the slope where it has been raised can be seen, on the other side of the river, the ceaselessly growing federal capital, called Washington, "a revered name," another French officer, the Chevalier de Chastellux, had written, when visiting, in 1782, another and earlier town of the same name in Connecticut, "a revered name, whose memory will undoubtedly last longer than the very city called upon to perpetuate it."

J. J. JUSSERAND

*Barry University Library*  
*Miami, Fla. 33161*

## L'ENFANT AND WASHINGTON

By the passage of the RESIDENCE ACT July 9, 1790, the seat of the Government of the United States was permanently fixed on the banks of the Potomac somewhere above the Eastern branch. By this Act the President was authorized to appoint three Commissioners, any two of whom would constitute a board, who, under the direction of the President, were to be called upon to "survey . . . . and limit a district . . . . for the permanent seat of Government . . . . and provide suitable buildings for the accommodation of Congress and of the President and for the public offices . . . ." The city thus constructed was to be ready for occupancy before "the first Monday in December, in the year one thousand eight hundred."<sup>1</sup> The exact location as well as the means to be employed in obtaining possession of the land, were left to the President to decide. His trusted advisors in all matters were Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State, and James Madison.

In regard to the choice of Commissioners two opposing ideas presented themselves:

"If they live near the place," wrote Jefferson in a note handed the President, "they may in some instances be influenced by self-interest and partialities; but they will push the work with zeal; if they are from a distance . . . , they will be more impartial, but may effect delays . . . . . The essential seems to be that the Commissioners be . . . . men who prefer residing . . . . so conveniently to the scene of business as to be able to attend regularly and gratis."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Standard History of the City of Washington* by Wm. Tindall, p. 34. Hereafter cited as Tindall.

<sup>2</sup> Tindall, p. 46. The Commissioners of the Federal District served without pay for the first two years. Afterwards \$1000.00 a year was allowed to each member of the Board.



Of the three appointed,<sup>2a</sup> Daniel Carroll of Rock Creek, whose farm was close by, was the most active and the most interested; especially because several of his near relatives figured conspicuously among the wealthy land-owners within the District Line.

These appointments were made early in January 1791, negotiations to secure possession of the land having already been begun the September previous. As there was no appropriation for purchase money, it was thought proper to secure if possible the cession to the public of part of the land, in consideration of "the increase of value" that would follow the establishment of the Federal City. Furthermore because of the "cupidity" which early manifested itself, it was decided to "play off the different localities against each other with a view to quickening among them a spirit of rivalry which should result in the most advantageous terms possible to the public."<sup>3</sup>

February 3, 1791, Washington wrote to Messrs. Stoddert and Deakins, merchants of Georgetown whom he trusted:

The federal territory being located, the competition for the location of the town now rests between the mouth of the Eastern branch and the lands on the river below and adjacent to Georgetown. . . The object of this letter is to ask you to endeavor to purchase these grounds for the public, but as if for yourselves, and to conduct your proposition so as to excite no suspicion that they are on behalf of the public . . .<sup>4</sup>

This letter was written on Wednesday. Thursday, Mr. Andrew Ellicott was ordered to "proceed by the first stage to the Federal territory on the Potomac for the purpose of making a survey of it."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2a</sup> The other two were Thomas Johnson of Maryland and David Stuart of Alexandria, Virginia.

<sup>3</sup> Tindall, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> W. C. Ford, *Writings of Washington*, vol. 12, pp. 15-16.

<sup>5</sup> Tindall, pp. 57-58. Major Ellicott was a surveyor and astronomer of repute who, at the time he was sent to survey the Federal territory, was Geographer-general to the Government. He was ordered to this work in continuation of his official duty and not as one especially engaged for the occasion.

The first appearance of the name of Major L'Enfant in the 1791 correspondence is to be found in a letter of the Secretary of State to the Commissioners under date of January 29, 1791, where it is said:

The President having thought Major L'Enfant peculiarly qualified to make such a draught of the ground as will enable him to fix on the spot for the public buildings, he has been written to for that purpose and will be sent on if he chooses to undertake it.<sup>6</sup>

The letter of Jefferson here indicated, with L'Enfant's reply thereto, have not come to light. March 2, however, Washington wrote his merchant friends:

Major L'Enfant comes to make [such] a survey of the grounds in your vicinity as may aid in fixing the site of the Federal town and buildings: his present instructions express those which are within the Eastern branch, the Potomac and the Tyber and the road leading from Georgetown to the ferry on the Eastern branch. He is directed to begin at the lower end and work upwards, and *nothing further* is communicated to him . . . . I expect that your progress will be facilitated . . . . by the presumption which will arise on seeing this operation begun at the Eastern branch and that the proprietors nearer Georgetown, who have hitherto refused to accommodate, will let themselves down to reasonable terms.<sup>7</sup>

As will be observed, L'Enfant's instructions made no mention of the plan of the city though he had made special application for this appointment immediately on learning that a bill was before Congress providing for a Federal establish-

<sup>6</sup> L'Enfant-Diggies-Morgan Collection, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. Hereafter cited as L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>7</sup> Ford, vol. 12, p. 16 n; also Tindall, p. 64.

ment. His letter to Washington on this occasion is in part as follows:

New York, September 11, 1789.

Ser;

The late determination of Congress to lay the foundation of a Federal City which is to become the Capital of this vast Empire, offers so great an occasion for acquiring reputation . . . . that Your Excellency will not be surprised that my ambition and the desire I have of becoming a useful citizen should lead me to wish to share in the undertaking.

No nation had ever before the opportunity offered them of deliberately deciding on the spot where their Capital City should be fixed, or of combining every necessary consideration in the choice of situation, and although the means now within the power of the Country are not such as to pursue the design to any great extent, it will be obvious that the plan should be drawn on such a scale as to leave room for that aggrandizement and embellishment which the increase of the wealth of the nation will permit it to pursue at any period however remote . . . .

. . . . . Nothing will be wanting to my happiness if the remembrance of my former services connected with a variety of peculiar circumstances during fourteen years residence in this country can plead with your Excellency in support of the favor I solicit . . . . .

(Signed) P. C. L'Enfant.<sup>s</sup>

Whether or not this letter elicited a response is uncertain; but at the beginning of March 1791 orders were sent L'Enfant to proceed to Georgetown. In his eagerness and enthusiasm the Major did not pause to consider that there had been no engagement of any kind regarding compensation for his services. Indeed, he himself would have resented such a suggestion. Frenchman of the old régime, he was used to

<sup>s</sup> Gaillard Hunt, Applications for office under Washington. Original in the Div. of Mss., Library of Congress.



the idea of royal munificence offered as recompense for works of genius, but a business contract based on mutual agreement was foreign to his thought.

The Secretary of State wrote L'Enfant as follows:

Sir;

You are desired to proceed to Georgetown where you will find Mr. Ellicott employed in making a survey and maps of the Federal Territory. The special object of asking your aid is to have drawings of the particular grounds most likely to be approved for the site of the Federal town and buildings. You will therefore be pleased to begin on the Eastern branch and proceed from thence upwards, laying down the hills, valleys, morasses and waters between that and the Potomac, the Tyber, and the road leading from Georgetown to the Eastern branch and connecting the whole with certain fixed points on the map Mr. Ellicott is preparing. Some idea of the hight of the lands above the base on which they stand would be desirable. For necessary assistance and expenses be pleased to apply to the Mayor of Georgetown who is written to on this subject. I will beg the favor of you to mark to me your progress about twice a week, by letter, say every Wednesday and Saturday evening, that I may be able in proper time to draw your attention to some other objects which I have not at this moment sufficient information to define.

I am, with great esteem, Sir, etc.

(Signed) Th. Jefferson.<sup>9</sup>

Proceeding immediately to Georgetown as directed, L'Enfant wrote a few days later to the Secretary of State:

Friday, March 11, 1791.

Sir:

I have the honor of informing you of my arrival at this place where I could not possibly reach before Wednesday

<sup>9</sup> Published in the Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Memorial Edition, Vol. VIII, p. 162.

last and very late in the evening, after having travelled part of the way on foot and part on horseback leaving the broken stage behind.

On arriving I made it my first care to wait on the Mayor of the town in conformity with the direction which you gave me. He appeared to be much surprised and he assured me he had received no previous notice of my coming nor any injunction relating to the business I was sent upon. However next day—yesterday morning—he made me a kind offer of his assistance in procuring for me three or four men to attend me in the surveying and this being the only thing I was in need of, every matter has been soon arranged. I am only at present to regret that an heavy rain and thick mist, which has been incessant ever since my arrival here, does put an insuperable obstacle to my wish of proceeding immediately to the survey. Should the weather continue bad, as there is every appearance it will, I shall be much at a loss how to make a plan of the ground you have pointed out to me and have it ready for the President at the time he is expected at this place. I see no other way, if by Monday next the weather does not change, but that of making a rough draft as accurate as may be obtained by viewing the ground in riding over it on horseback, as I have already done yesterday, through the rain, to obtain a knowledge of the whole. I . . [rode] from the Eastern branch towards Georgetown up the hights and down along side of the bank of the main river and along side of Goose and Rock creeks as far up as their springs.

As far as I was able to judge through a thick fog, I passed on many spots which appeared to me really beautiful and which seem to dispute with each other who (*sic*) commands the most extensive prospect on the water. The gradual rising of the ground from Carrollsburg towards the ferry road, the level and extensive ground from thence to the bank of the Potomac as far as Goose Creek—present a situation

most advantageous to run streets and prolong them on grand and far-distant points of view. The water running from springs at some distance into the creeks appeared also to me possible to be conducted without much labor, so as to form ponds for watering every part of that spot. The remainder part of that ground towards Georgetown is more broken. It may afford pleasant seats, but, although the bank of the river between the two creeks can command as grand a prospect as any of the other spots, it seems to be less commendable for the establishment of a city, not only because the level surface it presents is but small, but because the heights from beyond Georgetown absolutely command the whole.

No part of the ground between the Eastern branch and Georgetown can be said to be of a commanding nature; on the contrary it appears on first sight as being closely surrounded. However, in advancing towards the Eastern branch these heights seem to sink as the waves of a tempestuous sea, and when considering the city on that grand scale on which it ought to be planned, it will appear that the only height would unavoidably . . . . mean for battery in it, a small town easily to be comprehended in the limits of such a one as \_\_\_\_\_ and be rendered by a proper care in the appropriation of the buildings that may be there erected, a means of protection and security.<sup>10</sup> Such, Sir, are the few remarks which I have been able to make in a journey when the badness of the weather much impeded my progress. I hope therefore, for your indulgence in hazarding to communicate them to you.

I have the honor to be  
with very great respect . . . .<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The meaning of all this is rather obscure. It must be remembered however, that L'Enfant was not only an artist and engineer; he was a military expert as well; it was natural therefore that from his first visit the thought of rendering the city safe should have engrossed his mind.

<sup>11</sup> Except for extracts, this letter has not been previously published. The only known copy is an unsigned draft among the L'Enfant papers.



The arrival of Major L'Enfant was noted as follows in the *Georgetown Weekly Ledger* of March 12, 1791:

Wednesday evening arrived in this town Major Longfont (*sic*) a French gentleman employed by the President of the United States to survey the lands contiguous to Georgetown, where the Federal City is to be built. His skill in matters of this kind is justly extolled by all disposed to give merit its proper tribute of praise. He is earnest in the business and hopes to be able to lay a plan of that parcel of land before the President upon his arrival in this town.<sup>12</sup>

It was a long stage journey to Georgetown from Philadelphia, then the seat of Government. The trip was rendered more difficult because of the unabridged rivers that intervened. Washington planned to reach Georgetown towards the end of March, therefore the need of dispatch in making the first surveys. Among the many things to be settled during this visit, Jefferson had noted the following:

The *commission to be called into action* (italics inserted); deeds of cession to be taken from the land-owners; site of the Capitol and President's house to be determined on; proclamation completing the location of the territory and fixing the site of the Capital; town to be laid off . . . . .<sup>13</sup>

The 19th March, Jefferson wrote Major L'Enfant:

Sir;

Your favor of the 11th inst. has been duly received. Between the date of that and the receipt of the present, it is probable that the most important parts of the ground towards the Eastern branch will have been delineated. However, whether they have or not, the President will go within

<sup>12</sup> Tindall, p. 60.

<sup>13</sup> Tindall, p. 73. This note of Jefferson shows that the Commissioners had not assembled as a body until some time after L'Enfant's arrival.

two or three days, and would wish to have under his eye when at Georgetown, a drawing also of the particular lineaments of the ground between Rock Creek and the Tyber; you are desired immediately on the receipt of this, to commence the survey of that part, beginning at the river, and proceeding towards the part back of that till his arrival. If the meanders of those two creeks and of the river between them should not have been laid down either by yourself or by Mr. Ellicott, it is desired that Mr. Ellicott should immediately do this while you shall be employed on the interior ground, in order that the work may be as much advanced as possible on the arrival of the President, and that you will be so good as to notify this to Mr. Ellicott.

I am with great esteem, Sir, your most obedt. humble servt.

(Signed) Th. Jefferson.<sup>14</sup>

P. S. There are certainly considerable advantages on the Eastern branch; but there are very strong reasons also in favor of the position between Rock Creek and Tyber, independent of the face of the ground. It is desired that the proper amount should be in equilibrio between the two places till the President arrives, and we shall be obliged to you to endeavor to poise their expectations.

By this postscript L'Enfant, himself quite unconsciously however, was brought a little deeper into the subtilties of the game being played in order to bring the proprietors to such terms as were considered reasonable, and this before the President appeared on the scene. In the meantime L'Enfant had written a second letter to the Secretary of State:

Georgetown, March 20, 1791.

Sir,

On the 17th the change in the weather at last having permitted me to proceed to the Eastern branch, I did on the

<sup>14</sup> Original in the L'Enfant Papers, L. C.; published from *Letter press copy* by Tindall, p. 68.

afternoon of that day, Sat., [set] about the survey. But the variety of the weather has been such since as has impeded my progress. I have only been able this day, to lay down of that part which lay between the Eastern branch and the Tiber so much as included Jenkin's Hill and all the water course from round Carroll point up to the ferry landing; leaving for a better time swampy parts which were rendered absolutely impassable by the heavy rain which overflowing all the low ground determined me to confine myself on the high land. I expected to have before this day attempted to lay down some part of those laying between the Tiber and Rock Creek had not a fall of snow and stormy wind which succeeded for these three days past prevented me.

I hope tomorrow will prove more favorable for me to proceed laying down those parts which you prescribe in your letter which [I] this moment receive from Mr. Ellicott, who brought it himself to me, and shall according to your direction join his endeavors to mine in running as much as possible of the water course as may serve to connect the whole of our different surveys together.

I have the honor to be  
with great respect Sir,

Your most humble and most obedient servant  
(Signed) P. C. L'Enfant.<sup>15</sup>

Washington's *Diary* for March 1791, Monday the 28th, contains the following:

. . . . . Dined at Suter's tavern (where I also lodged) at a public dinner given by the Mayor and the Corporation—previous to which I examined the surveys of Mr. Ellicott who has been sent on to lay out the district of ten miles square for the federal seat; and also the works of Major L'Enfant who has been engaged to examine & make

<sup>15</sup> Papers of the District, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished). Note on reverse: "Received the 24th."











George Town April 4, 1791 —

Dear

I would have reproached myself for not having written to you as regularly as you had desired I should were it not for Circumstances to which you will I doubt not attribute this seeming neglect in answering of the Considerations which made me give the whole of my time to forwards as much as possibly could be the business I had to perform. Great as were my Endeavour to that end it still remains unfinished at the moment of the President's arrival at this place were I could present him no more but a rough drawing in pencil of the several Surveys which I had been able to run — nevertheless the President's Indulgent Disposition making him account for the Difficulties he encountered, I had the Satisfaction to see the little I had done agreeable to his wish — and the Confidence with which he has been pleased since to Honor me in ordering the Surveys to be continued and the delineation of a grand plan for the local Distribution of the City to be done on principle conformable to the ideas which I took the liberty to hold before him of the proper for the Establishment being to leave flattery to my ambition to fail leaving the best of my abilities. It shall be from this moment my Endeavour to remove the President's Expectation in preparing

preparing those plays and having them ready for the time of his return from the Southern tour.

I shall in the mean while, for beg for every  
information respecting all what may in your judgement appear of most  
immediate importance to attend to as well as relating to every  
desirable Establishment which it will be well to, viz although  
delaying or perhaps leaving the Speculation thereof to a natural  
proportion of time to Effect.

The number and nature of the public building  
with the necessary appendage I should be glad to have a Statement  
of as speedily as possible - and I would be very much obliged  
to you in the mean time if you could procure for me what ever  
maps may fall within your reach - of any of the different grand  
city now existing such as for example - as London - madry - paris  
Amsterdam - naples - venice - genoa - florence together with  
particular maps of any such sea ports or dock yards, and originals  
as you may know to be the most complete in their improvement  
for ~~improvement~~ <sup>improvement</sup> I would reprobate the Idea of Imitating and  
that contrary of having this intention it is only with and shall be my  
Indivisible to

endeavour to delineate in a new and original way the plan the  
arbitrariness of which the President has left to me without any  
restriction to me — yet the contemplation of what best of well  
improved situation, even the parallel of these with defective ones,  
may serve to suggest a variety of new ideas and is necessary to  
refine and strengthen the judgement particularly in the present  
instance when having to unite the useful with the amiable &  
agreeable viewing these will be offering means for comparing enable  
me the better to determine with a certainty the propriety of a local  
which offer an extensive field for combinations.

I have the Honour to be  
with great respect

Yours

your most humble  
and most obliged  
servant

P. C. Schuyler

Wm Jefferson Secretary of State.



draught of the grds. in the vicinity of George Town and Carrollsborg on the Eastern Branch making arrangements for examining the grounds myself tomorrow with the Commissioners.<sup>16</sup>

April 4th L'Enfant wrote Jefferson as follows:

Sir;

I would have reproached myself for not having written to you as regularly as you desired. I should were it not for circumstances to which you will I doubt not attribute this seeming neglect in approving of the considerations which made me give the whole of my time to forwards as much as possibly could be the business I had to perform. Great as were my endeavors to that end it *steel* remained unfinished at the moment of the President arrival at this place where I could present him no more but a rough drawing in pencil of the several surveys which I had been able to run—nevertheless the President indulgent disposition making him account for the difficulties encountered, I had the satisfaction to see the little I had done agreeable to his wish—and the confidence with which he has been pleased since to Honor me in ordering the survey to be continued and *the delineation of a grand plan for the local distribution of the city* (italics inserted), to be done on principle conformable to the ideas which I took the liberty to hold before him as the proper for the Establishment being to highly flatering to my Embition to fail exerting the best of my hability. it shall be from this moment my endeavor to answer the president expectations in preparing those plans and having them ready for the time of his return from the Southern tour.

I shall in the meantime, Sir, beg for every information respecting all what may in your judgement appear of most immediate importance to attend to as well as relating to every desirable Establishment which it will be well to foresee

<sup>16</sup> Tindall, p. 75; Washington's Diaries, Vol. IV.

although delaying or perhaps leaving the Execution thereof to a natural succession of time to Effect.

the number and nature of the publick building with the necessary appendix I should be glad to have a statement of as speedily as possible—and I would be very much obliged to you in the mean time if you could procure for me whatever map may fall within your reach—of any of the differents grand city now Existing such as—for example—as london—madry [Madrid]—paris—Amsterdam—naples—venice—genoa—florence together with particular maps of any such sea-ports or dock-yards and arsenals as you may know to be the most compleat in their Improvement, for, notwithstanding, I would *reprobate the Idea of Imitating* and that contrary of Having this Intention *it is my wish and shall be my endeavor to delinate on a new and original way the plan the contrivance of which the President has left to me without any restriction soever* (italics inserted)—yet the contemplation of what exists of well improved situation even the parallel of these with deffective ones, may serve to suggest a variety of new Ideas and is necessary to refine and strengthen the Judgment particularly in the present instance when having to unite the useful with the comodious and agreeable viewing these will by offering means of comparing enable me the better to determine with a certainty the propriety of a local which offer an Extensive field for combinations.

I have the Honor to be, with great respect,  
Your most humble and most obedient servant  
(Signed) P. C. L'Enfant.

Mr. Jefferson, Secretary of State.<sup>17</sup>

This letter is a document of primary significance for the case of L'Enfant. It shows that the commission for draw-

<sup>17</sup> Papers of the District, L. C., vol. 1. This letter is given by Tindall, pp. 89 *et seq.*

ing the “grand plan” was conveyed orally by Washington. In his Diary, after noting the happy result of his conference with the proprietors, under date of *Wednesday 30th [April]*, the President says:

The business being thus happily finished and some directions given to the Commissioners, the Surveyor and Engineer with respect to the mode of laying out the district—Surveying the grounds for the City and forming them into lots—I left Georgetown—dined at Alexandria and reached Mount Vernon in the evening.<sup>18</sup>

Next day from Mount Vernon, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson, Washington summed up the situation as follows:

. . . . . the whole containing from three to five thousand acres is ceded to the public on condition that when the whole shall be surveyed and laid off as a city (*which Major L’Enfant is now directed to do*) (italics inserted), the present Proprietors shall retain every other lot—and for such part of the land as may be taken for public use, for squares, walks etc. they shall be allowed at the rate of twenty-five pounds per acre—the Public having right to reserve such parts of the wood on the land as may be thought necessary to be preserved for ornament. . . . . nothing is to be allowed for ground which may be occupied as streets or alleys.<sup>19</sup>

Among the L’Enfant documents still retained in the office of *Public Buildings and Grounds*, is one undated which undoubtedly was handed by L’Enfant to the President while he was at Georgetown. It bears the legend:

*Note relative to the ground lying on the eastern branch of the river Potomac and being intended to parallel the several positions proposed within the limits between the branch and Georgetown for the seat of the Federal City.*

<sup>18</sup> Tindall, p. 76.

<sup>19</sup> Tindall, p. 85.



After coming upon the hill from the Eastern branch ferry, the country is level and on a space of about two miles each way presents a most eligible position for the first settlement of a grand City, and one which if not the only [one] within the limits of the Federal territory, is at least the more advantageous in that part lying between the Eastern Branch and Georgetown.

The soil is dry and, notwithstanding well watered—abounding in springs; it has an wholesome air and being of an easy ascent it is however so high that it commands on most of the surrounding country and may be effectually guarded from those hills overlooking it—these are on the opposite side of the water and branch from the grand western mountains which come round and extend down on that Eastern shore in bordering on that river Potomac and they may rather be considered as a means for protection. As the securing of their summit with proper Establishment would render that situation more respectable (*sic*).

With respect to navigation it lies at the head of an extensive one and . . . from the bank of a harbor in every respect to be preferred to that of the Potomac toward Georgetown [because] less impeded by ice and never so swelled by fresh [water]—The channel is deeper and will admit any vessels that may pass over the shallows below at Maryland point being moored to wharfs whilst they must remain a half mile off from the banks of the Potomac owing to the main channel bearing into the Eastern branch, immediately and all the way up on the Virginia shore until it comes to strike on Mason Island, round which in turning it comes for to wash ashore . . . on rock at Hampton Pt. or Funktown, making its way to and from the wharfs at Georgetown where the grand navigation ends.

This spot made to derive every possible advantage from water surveyance would at the same time be free from the

great inconveniency attending the crossing of navigable river. The deep water in that branch not coming up further than Evans Pt. about half a mile above the ferry, there the large bed of the river immediately changes into a run over which bridges might easily be erected to secure a constant intercourse with the eastern continent, in the mean while as it would facilitate seats being fixed on each border of a grand stream whose depths abound in fish and whose aspect . . . rests the eyes from the grand sight below [of] the city.

All the total of this ground is such as will favor every improvement as may render the City agreeable, commodious, and capable of promoting all sorts of manufacturing establishments on its water side from the mouth of the Eastern branch at Carrollsburg as far up as to Evans Pt. a distance of about three miles. The frequent winding of the shore form many natural wet docks which, though not having every where a great depth of water nevertheless would become very convenient for the establishing of naval stores and for arsenals the which as well as warehouses for merchantmen might safely be raised on the edge of the water without fear of impeding the prospect from the high flat behind.

There, where the level ground [borders] on the water and all round where it descends, but most particularly on that part terminating in a ridge to Jenkin's Hill and running in a parallel with and at half a mile off from the river Potomac, separated by a low ground intersected with three grand streams—many of the most desirable positions offer for to erect the Public Edifices thereon—From these hights every grand building would rear with a majestic aspect over the Country all around and might be advantageously seen from twenty miles off . . . [from] the first settlement of the City they would stand to ages in a central point to it, facing on the grandest prospect of both . . . branches of the Potomac

with the town of Alexandria in front, seen in its full extent over many points of land projecting from the Maryland and Virginia shores in a manner as adds much to the perspective, at the end of which the Cape of Hunting Creek appears directly where a corner stone of the Federal District is to be placed and in the room of which a majestic column or a grand pyramid being erected would produce the happiest effect and completely finish the landscape.

Thus in every respect advantageously situated, the Federal City would soon grow of itself and spread as the branches of a tree do towards where they meet with most nourishment. . . . .

Having a bridge laid over the Eastern branch somewhere about Evans Pt. there the natural limit of the eastern branch of the City may be extended while in its western extremity may be included Georgetown itself, which being situated at the head of grand navigation of the Potomac should be favored with the same advantage of better communication with the southern [country] by having also a bridge erected over the Potomac at the place of the two Sisters where nature would effectually favor the undertaking.

There between those two points, beginning with the settlement . . . . on the bank of the Eastern branch and promoting the first improvements all along the high flat as far as where it ends on Jenkins Hill, would place central to the ground left open, its growth, which most undoubtedly would be rapid towards both extremities, provided that . . . . attention be paid immediately . . . to open a direct and large avenue from the bridge on the Potomac to that on the Eastern branch . . . . with a middle way paved for heavy carriages and a walk on each side planted with double rows of trees to the end that by making it a communication as agreeable as it will be convenient, it may induce the improvement of either place all along and prompt the citizens in



both to exertions to shorten the distance by buildings, insensibly effecting the wished injunction and [so] complete a street laid out on a dimension proportioned to the greatness which . . . the Capital of a powerful Empire ought to manifest.

In viewing the intended establishment in the light and considering how in process of time a city so happily situated will extend over a large surface of ground, much deliberation is necessary for to determine on a plan for the total distribution and . . . that plan [should be conceived] on [such] a system . . . as to render the place commodious and agreeable to the first settler, [while] it may be capable of . . . [being] enlarged by progressive improvement . . . [all] which should be foreseen in the first delineation in a grand plan of the whole city combined with the various grounds it will cover and with the particular circumstance of the country all around.

In endeavoring to effect this, it is not the regular assemblage of houses laid out in squares and forming streets all parallel and uniform that it is so necessary, for such a plan could only do on a level plain and where no surrounding object being interesting it becomes indifferent which way the opening of streets may be directed.

But on any other ground, a plan of this sort must be defective, and it never would answer for any of the spots proposed for the Federal City, and on that held here as the most eligible it would absolutely annihilate every [one] of the advantages enumerated and . . . alone injure the success of the undertaking.

Such regular plans indeed, however answerable they may appear upon paper or seducing as they may be on the first aspect to the eyes of some people must even when applied upon the ground the best calculated to admit of it become at last tiresome and insipid and it never could be in its origin

but a mean continuance of some cool imagination wanting a sense of the real grand and truly beautiful only to be met with where nature contributes with art and diversifies the objects.<sup>20</sup>

The final paragraph of the above report takes on special significance when it is realized that this outburst was occasioned by Jefferson's "rough sketch."<sup>21</sup> This "rough sketch" had been sent to L'Enfant by Washington together with a letter of April 4th, in which he says that it was "done under an idea that no offer worthy of consideration would come from landholders in the vicinity of Carrollsburg from the backwardness which appeared in them—and therefore was accommodated to the grounds about Georgetown."

From this letter of Washington, from the diary entries, and from the entire correspondence of the period, it is plain that Washington's mind was more deeply occupied with the question of securing a title to the public lands and with the settlement of disputes which kept arising among the proprietors than with the plan of the city. Jefferson, however, who had not yet seen the foregoing report, entered into the details of this matter with a thoroughly awakened interest. He wrote L'Enfant:

Philadelphia, Apr. 10, 1791

Sir,

I am favored with your letter of the 4th inst., and in compliance with your request I have examined my papers and found the plans of Frankfort-on-the-Mayne, Carlsruhe, Amsterdam, Strasburg, Paris, Orleans, Bordeaux, Lyons,

<sup>20</sup> This report, supposed to bear date of March 26, 1791, is to be found in the original in the Archives of Public Buildings and Grounds, and has been published in the RECORDS of the Columbia Historical Society. The above is reproduced from the printed copy. Here and in subsequent documents that are available in printed form certain misleading spellings have been corrected however and in other places confused expressions are slightly altered by omitting a few words and inserting others, with an additional punctuation here and there.

<sup>21</sup> For this interesting piece of information thanks are due to Mr. William Partridge, Consulting Architect of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Jefferson's hostility to L'Enfant undoubtedly originated here.

Montpelier, Marseilles, Turin and Milan, which I send in a roll by this post. They are on large and accurate scales, having been procured by me when in those respective cities myself. As they are connected with the notes I made in my travels, & often necessary to explain them to myself, I will beg your care of them and to return them when no longer useful to you, leaving you absolutely free to keep them as long as useful. I am happy that the *President has left the planning of the town in such good hands* (Italicized in pencil by L'Enfant), and have no doubt it will be done to general satisfaction. Considering that the ground to be reserved for the public are to be paid for by the acre, I think very liberal reservations should be made for them, and if this be about the Tyber and on the back of the town it will be of no injury to the commerce of the place, which will undoubtedly establish itself on the deep waters on the Eastern branch and mouth of Rock Creek; The water about the mouth of the Tyber not being of any depth, those connected with the Government will prefer fixing themselves near the public grounds in the center, which will also be convenient to be resorted to as walks from the lower and upper town.— Having communicated to the President before he went away such general ideas on the subject of the town as occurred to me, I make no doubt that, in explaining himself to you on the subject, he has interwoven with his own ideas such of mine as he approved: for fear of repeating therefore what he did not approve, and having more confidence in the unbiased state of his mind than in my own, I avoid interfering with what he may have expressed to you. Whenever it is proposed to prepare plans for the Capitol I should prefer the adoption of some one of the models of antiquity which have had the approbation of thousands of years; and for the President's house I should prefer the celebrated fronts of modern buildings which have already received the appro-



bation of all good judges. Such are the Galerie du Louvre, the Gardes meubles, and two fronts of the Hotel de Salm. But of this it is yet time enough to consider. In the mean time I am with great esteem, Sir,

Your most obdt. humble sert.

(Signed) Th. Jefferson.<sup>22</sup>

April 12, 1791, the first full board of Commissioners met. The records of the meeting show that the attention was wholly fixed upon "The form of conveyance to Trustees, to be executed by the Proprietors etc . . . ." So far they had given no attention to the survey of the territory or to the plan of the city entrusted to L'Enfant.<sup>23</sup>

The first communication addressed to L'Enfant by Daniel Carroll was the following brief note bearing date of April 17th, 1791:

Sir;

The bearer, Mr. Caily has been recommended to me as an ingenious young gentleman; he wishes to be introduced to you. He will probably be attended by Mr. Savage, an acquaintance of yours.

I am with esteem etc.

(Signed) Danl. Carroll.<sup>24</sup>

A few days later, Daniel Carroll wrote at length to James Madison giving him an account of all that had transpired and outlining plans for the future. He says in part:

Georgetown, April 23, 1791.

The President has appointed to meet us on the 27th of June. By that time he expects Majr. L'Enfant will be ready,

<sup>22</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. Partly reproduced by Tindall, p. 92.

<sup>23</sup> See Tindall, p. 93.

<sup>24</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished). Below in pencil, L'Enfant has written—today scarcely legible—"This may afford evidence that the Commissioners were agreed in leaving the choice and employment of per[sons?] with me."

agreeably to his instruction, with a description of the grounds within the city—it is probable that some plans of the city and the public buildings may be then exhibited.

It is the President's wish that a plan of the city be published in time to commence a sale of some lots about a fortnight before the meeting of Congress so that the southern members who may chuse (*sic*) to purchase may take it in their way and time be allowed for any of the Northern members who may chuse to come down. You have read in the papers that it is expected the sale of the lots will produce at least 300,000 pounds for public use. This with the grants from Virginia and Maryland will amount to near a million dollars.<sup>25</sup>

On the 15th April the Commissioners met at Alexandria and accompanied by Ellicott, who had already run part of the District boundary line, “and a large concourse of spectators, proceeded to Jones point . . . . and fixed a stone at that place . . . .”<sup>26</sup>

March 31st Washington had left Georgetown and proceeded to Mount Vernon and thence to the Southward. From different points on his tour he wrote the Commissioners, but his whole concern centered in the boundary line of the District and in securing the public lands from the proprietors. Not until after his return to Georgetown is there any mention of the plan of the city either in his letters or in his Diary, although it is certain he expected on his return to find a plan sufficiently prepared for its details to be discussed. The date set for the next meeting of the Commissioners, as the letter of Daniel Carroll to James Madison shows, was June 27th. His itinerary, carefully prepared in advance, provided for a two weeks stay at Mount Vernon before that date. During these two weeks no entry was made in his Diary, if the following brief note be excepted:

<sup>25</sup> Papers of James Madison, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>26</sup> See Tindall, p. 93.

Sunday 12th [June]: . . . Arrived at Mt. Vn. to dinner. From Monday 13th to Monday the 27th . . . I remained at home; spent my time in daily rides to my several farms and in receiving many visits.<sup>27</sup>

This is most disappointing for we know that one of the visits spoken of was from Major L'Enfant and that he brought a draft of the first plan and a memoir which he had written to accompany it bearing date of June 22nd. That Washington failed to record the time spent with L'Enfant poring over the plans and charts of the proposed development of the city in which his whole interest was wrapped up is remarkable.

The Report reads: <sup>28</sup>

Sir;

In delineating the plan for the intended city here annexed, I regretted very much being hindered by the shortness of time from making any particular drawing of the several buildings, squares, and other improvements which the smallness of the scale of the general map, together with the hurry with which it had been drawn could not admit of having lain them down, as correct as . . . is necessary to give a

<sup>27</sup> Washington's Diaries. Vol. IV, p. 199.

<sup>28</sup> This Report, left with Washington and now in the Archives of *Public Buildings and Grounds* has been published by the Columbia Historical Society. There is another copy of the Report among the L'Enfant papers, in the hand writing of Isaac Roberdeau, secretary and first assistant to L'Enfant, which though essentially the same is yet in places quite differently expressed. The Roberdeau copy has been used in this reproduction; being incomplete however, the final paragraphs have been taken from the published report.

This document is placed in the L'Enfant Collection as though it were dated March; this is because L'Enfant has written over the copy, which is undated, first, "Philadelphia, August 1791" and below, "Georgetown—March—1791." The first is smeared as though he wished to efface what he had written. Evidently this addition was made late in life when the exact details of the various transactions had faded somewhat in his mind. Or it may be that he failed to examine carefully which of the three Reports, March 26, June 22, or August 19, this one was. It bears also in pencil a faint legend: "*This has reference to the first plan . . . and was accompanied with the drawing of the whole city.*"



perfect idea of the effect when executed. My whole attention was directed to a combination of the general distribution of the several situations, an object which, being of almost immediate moment, and importance, made me sacrifice every other consideration—and here again must I solicit your indulgence, in submitting to your judgment—my ideas, and in presenting to you a first drawing, correct only as it respects the situation and distance of objects, all which were determined and well ascertained having for more accuracy had several lines run upon the ground cleared of the wood, and measured with posts fixed at certain distances to serve as bases from which I might arrange the whole with a certainty of making it fit the various parts of the ground.

Having determined some principal points to which I wished to make the others subordinate, I made the distribution regular with every street at right angles, North and South, east and west, and afterwards opened some in different directions, as avenues to and from every principal place, wishing thereby not merely to contract with the general regularity, nor to afford a greater variety of seats with pleasant prospects, which will be obtained from the advantageous ground over which these avenues are chiefly directed, but principally to connect each part of the city, if I may so express it, by making the real distance less from place to place, by giving to them reciprocity of sight and by making them thus seemingly connected, promote a rapid settlement over the whole extent, rendering those even of the most remote parts an addition to the principal, which without the help of these, were any such settlement attempted, it would be languid, and lost in the extent, and become detrimental to the establishment. Some of these avenues were also necessary to effect the junction of several roads to a central point in the city, by making these roads shorter, which is effected [by directing them] to those leading to Bladensburg and the Eastern branch—both of which are

made above a little shorter, exclusive of the advantage of their leading immediately to the wharves at Georgetown. The hilly ground which surrounds that place the growth of which it must impede, by inviting settlements on the city side of Rock Creek, which cannot fail soon to spread along all those avenues which will afford a variety of pleasant rides, and become the means for a rapid intercourse with all parts of the city, to which they will serve as does the main artery in the animal body, which diffuses life through the smaller vessels, and inspires vigor, and activity throughout the whole frame.

These avenues I made broad, so as to admit of their being planted with trees leaving 80 feet for a carriage way, 30 feet on each side for a walk under a double row of trees, and allowing ten feet between the trees and the houses. The first of these avenues and the most direct one, begins at the Eastern branch and ends over Rock Creek at the wharves at Georgetown, along the side of which it is continued to the bridge over to the Virginia shore, and down to the lower canal to the Potomac, along the sides of which it may be of great advantage to have such a road extended to the upper canal to facilitate dragging the boats up and down.

With respect to the point upon which it is expedient first to begin the main establishment, however various the opinions thereon are, I believe the question may be easily solved, not viewing in part but embracing in one view the whole extent from the Eastern branch to Georgetown, and from the banks of the Potomac to the mountains, for in considering impartially the whole extent, viewing it as that of the intended city, it will appear that to promote a rapid settlement throughout, across the Tiber above tide water is the most eligible one, for an offset of the establishment which . . . . should be begun at various points equi-distant as possible from the center; not merely because settlements of this

sort are likely to diffuse an equality of advantages over the whole territory allotted, and consequently to reflect benefit from an increase of the value of property, but because each of these settlements by a natural jealousy will most tend to stimulate establishments on each of the opposed extremes, to both of which it will undoubtedly become, as so many points of union, particularly considering that a canal is easily opened from the Eastern branch across those primary settlements of the city to issue at the mouth of the Tiber into the Potomac, giving entrance to the boats from the falls of that river into the Eastern branch harbor, which will undoubtedly facilitate a conveyance, which will be of the utmost convenience to all trading people, and the supplies of the city by markets, as designed in the map, which may be built over ground capable of sheltering any number of boats and to serve as a depository, when the city is grown to its whole extent, from whence all the internal parts may be supplied. At the place first mentioned above, where the tide water comes into Tiber Creek, is the position the most capable of any within the limits of the city, to favor those grand improvements of public magnitude which may serve as a sample for all subsequent undertakings, an edifice erected there such as the peculiarity of the ground may admit, well combined with the various directions of those avenues concentrating there, should stand to future ages a monument of magnificence.

After a minute search for other eligible situations, I may assert without an apprehension of appearing prejudiced in favor of a first opinion, that I could not discover one in all respects so advantageous . . . . for erecting the Federal House . . . [as] the western end of Jenkin's Heights [which] stands really as a pedestal waiting for a superstructure, and I am confident were all the ground cleared of wood, no other situation could bear a competition with this. Some



might perhaps require less labor to be made agreeable, but after all none could be made so grand, and all would appear secondary to this.

The other position of a different nature offers a local equality, answerable for a Presidential palace, better calculated for a commodious house and which may be rendered majestic and agreeable. This position which very justly attracted your attention when first viewing the ground which is upon the west side and near the mouth of the Tiber, on that height dividing Burns and Pierces plantations—

The spot I assigned I chose somewhat more in the wood, and off the creek than when you stood in the partition line . . . two considerations determined me; first, to lessen the distance to the Federal House, and secondly to obtain a more extensive view down the Potomac, with a prospect of the whole harbor and town of Alexandria; also to connect with more harmony the public walks and avenue of the Congress House with the garden park and other improvements round the palace, which, standing upon this high ridge, with a garden in a slope towards the canal would overlook the vast esplanade in the center of which, and at the point of intersection of the sight from each of the Houses, would be the most advantageous place for an equestrian statue, which with proper appendages and walks artfully managed, would produce a most grand effect. In the present unimproved state of the ground it will appear that the hight, upon which the plan of this monument is marked, will intercept the view of the water from the palace, which in part it would were it not to be observed that to bound the entrance of the Tiber to 200 feet, which is the extreme width of the canal to prevent its being drained at low water, will require a great quantity of ground to fill up, at least as much as will serve to level all the high ground in the way to the edge of the water, especially as there will be a propriety to extend it as far as low water mark upon the Potomac.

(At this point the Roberdeau copy ends. What follows is taken from the published copy of the manuscript handed Washington.)

Fixed as expressed on the map <sup>29</sup> the distance from the Congressional house will not be too great . . . . as . . . . no message to nor from the President is to be made without a sort of decorum which will doubtless point out the propriety of Committee waiting on him in carriage should his palace be even contiguous to Congress.

To make however the distance less to other officers I placed the three grand Departments of State contiguous to the principal palace; and on the way leading to the Congressional house, the gardens of the one together with the park and other improvements . . . . are connected with the public walk and avenue to the Congress house in a manner as must form a whole as grand as it will be agreeable and convenient to the whole city. . . . . and all along side of which may be placed play houses, rooms of assembly, academies and all such sort of places as may be attractive to the learned and afford diversion to the idle.

I proposed continuing the canal much farther up, but this not to be effected but with the aid of lock, and from a level obtained from the hight of the spring of the Tiber, the greatest facility being to bring those waters over the flat back of Jenkins, I gave the more readily the preference. . . . to supply that part of the city as it will promote the execution of a plan which I propose in this map, of letting the Tiber return to its proper channel by a fall, which issuing from under the base of the Congress building, may there form a cascade of forty feet high, or more than one hundred wide, which would produce the most happy effect in rolling down to fill up the canal and discharge itself in the Potomac, of which it would then appear the main spring when seen through that grand and majestic avenue intersecting with

<sup>29</sup> "Map" and "Plan" of the city seem to have been used interchangeably by L'Enfant and others, at this time.

the prospect from the palace, at a point which being seen from both, I have designated as the proper for to erect a grand equestrian statue.

(Here follows the last paragraph of the Roberdeau copy with the ending):

. . . . . the whole will acquire new sweetness being laid over the green of a field well level and made brilliant by shade of a few trees artfully planted.

I am with respectful submission,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

P. C. L'Enfant.

To the President of the United States.<sup>30</sup>

No note has come to light which gives Washington's reaction to the plan and no comment of his has been preserved regarding the Report which accompanied it. His entire satisfaction with the general idea is convincingly demonstrated however by L'Enfant's repeated references to the confidence which the President had ever been pleased to manifest towards him and his work. Changes were discussed and certain ones adopted, and these L'Enfant was desired to incorporate in the "Grand Plan" which as soon as completed was to be brought to the President at Philadelphia.

Washington's Diary entries for the few days spent at Georgetown are disappointingly reticent regarding the plan.

He says:

*Monday, 27, June, 1791:* Left Mount Vernon for Georgetown before six o'clock; and according to appointment met the Commissioners at that place by nine. Then calling together the proprietors of those lands on which it was proposed the Federal City was to be built . . . . . they readily waived their objections and agreed to convey to the utmost extent of what was required.

*Tuesday, 28th:* While the Commissioners were engaged in preparing the deeds to be signed by the subscribers . . . . I went out with Major L'Enfant and Ellicott to take a more

<sup>30</sup> Records, Vol. 2, pp. 32-37.



perfect view of the ground in order to decide finally on the spots on which to place the public buildings and to direct how a line . . . . . should be run.

Wednesday, 29th: The deeds which remained unexecuted yesterday were signed today . . . . . This being accomplished, I called together the Several Subscribers and made known to them the spots on which I meant to place the buildings . . . . . *A Plan was also laid* (italics inserted) before them of the City in order to convey to them a general idea . . . . . and it was with much pleasure that a general approbation seemed to pervade the whole.

Thursday, 30th: The business which brot me to Georgetown being finished and the Commissioners being instructed with the mode of carrying the plan into effect, I set off this morning a little after four o'clock, in the prosecution of my journey to Philadelphia.<sup>31</sup>

In the mean time the city site was being transformed into a scene of the most intense activity. Foundations were being dug; trees cut down; brick-kilns erected; surveyors were running lines and preparing to lay down avenues which would connect outlying parts with the center; and all the while L'Enfant was perfecting and completing his "Plan" according to the final decisions of the President.

During the period immediately succeeding the President's visit to Georgetown, there is no trace of correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and L'Enfant, and no note that throws light upon the opinion of the Secretary of State regarding the development of the "Plan." Washington's Diaries from July 5, 1791, to the end of September 1794, are missing, so this valuable side light upon the progress of the Federal city fails us during all that period. Jefferson wrote L'Enfant as follows:

Philadelphia, August 18, 1791.

Sir:

The President has understood for some time past that you were coming on to Philadelphia & New York, and there-

<sup>31</sup> Washington Diaries; also Tindall, p. 10.

fore has delayed mentioning to you some matters which have occurred to him. Will you be so good as to inform me by return of post whether it is still your purpose to come this way, & when, that the President will thereon decide whether he will communicate his ideas by letter, or await your coming to do it by word. If you are detained by laying out the lots you had better not await that, as a suggestion has been made here of arranging them in a particular manner which will probably make them more convenient to the purchasers, and more profitable to the sellers.

A person applied to me the other day on the subject of engraving a map of the Federal territory. I observed to him that if yourself *or Mr. Ellicott* <sup>32</sup> chose to have this done, you would have the best right to it. If you do I would suggest to you the idea of doing it on a square sheet to hang upwards, thus the outlines being N. W. N. E. S. W. S. E. the meridians will be vertical as they ought to be; the streets of the city will be horizontal and vertical, & near the center, the Potomac and the Eastern branch will be nearly so also; there will be no waste in the square sheet of paper. This is suggested merely for your consideration. I am with much esteem Sir, Yours etc.

(Signed) Thomas Jefferson.<sup>33</sup>

On August 27th, L'Enfant, who had arrived in Philadelphia several days before, was asked to call upon the President “. . . about 5 o'clock or from that to 6 . . .”<sup>34</sup>

He was also invited to dine at Mr. Jefferson's “with him and Mr. Madison alone at half after three tomorrow” (dated Wednesday August 31). Previous to this there had been a conference as the following letter from the Secretary of State to the Commissioners at Georgetown, testifies:

<sup>32</sup> Underlined in pencil by L'Enfant. Below he has written “What right could this man have thereto?” ..

<sup>33</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished)

<sup>34</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

Philadelphia, August 28, 1791;

Gentlemen;

Your joint letters . . . . as also Mr. Carroll's . . . have been duly received. Major L'Enfant having also arrived here and laid *his plan of the Federal city* (Italics inserted) before the President, he was pleased to desire a conference of certain persons, in his presence, on these several subjects. It is the opinion of the President in consequence thereof that an immediate meeting of the Commissioners at Georgetown is requisite, that certain measures may be decided on and put into a course of preparation for a commencement of sale on the 17th of Octob. as advertised. As Mr. Madison and myself, who were present at the conference, propose to pass through Georgetown on our way to Virginia, the President supposes that our attendance at the meeting of the Commissioners might be of service to them, as we could communicate to them the sentiments developed at the conference here and approved by the President . . . . . time and distance oblige me to take the liberty of proposing the day of meeting, and to say that we will be in Georgetown on the evening of the 7th or morning of the 8th of next month

. . . . .

I have the honor to be etc. etc.

(Signed) Th. Jefferson.<sup>35</sup>

4

The " Plan " which L'Enfant took with him to show the President is the one now in the possession of the Map Division of the Library of Congress. The original is no longer legible owing to unfortunate methods employed for its preservation; it has however been admirably reproduced and been made available to all through the Coast and Geodetic Survey Department of the Government. It is this plan which stamps for all time its author as one of the world's greatest creative geniuses. It must be studied directly in order to be appreciated; more than that, the fact must never

<sup>35</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).



be lost sight of that at every point, *covering an area of over fifty square miles*, the whole "internal content of the district . . . was surveyed in the most menutial (*sic*) way by the most laborious operations (which no ordinary surveyor of land is called upon to understand)." <sup>36</sup>

Some idea of the work accomplished by L'Enfant may be had from the following inscriptions taken from the border of his plan:

PLAN OF THE CITY, INTENDED FOR THE PERMANENT SEAT OF GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES, PROJECTED AGREEABLE TO THE DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, in pursuance of an ACT of CONGRESS passed the SIXTEENTH DAY OF JULY MDCCXC, ESTABLISHING THE PERMANENT SEAT on the banks of the POTOMAC. Pierre Charles L'Enfant.

#### OBSERVATIONS EXPLANATORY OF THE PLAN

I. The positions for the different Grand Edifices, and for the several Grand Squares or Areas of different shapes as they are laid down, were first determined on the most advantageous ground, commanding the most extensive prospects, and the better susceptible of such improvements as the various intents of the several objects may require.

II. Lines or Avenues of direct communication have been devised, to connect the separate and most distant objects with the principal, and to preserve through the whole a reciprocity of sight at the same time. Attention has been paid to the passing of those leading avenues over the most favorable ground for prospect and convenience.

III. North and South lines, intersected by others running due East and West, make the distribution of the city into

<sup>36</sup> L'Enfant Memorial (Hitherto unpublished) in L'Enfant Papers, L. C. Vol. II, ff. 319-322.







streets, squares etc., and those lines have been so combined as to meet at certain given points with those divergent avenues, so as to form on the spaces “first determined,” the different Squares or Areas which are all proportional in magnitude to the number of avenues leading to them.

#### BREADTH OF THE STREETS

Every Grand transverse Avenue, and every principal divergent one, such as the communication from the President’s House to the Congress House etc. are 160 feet in breadth and thus divided :

10 feet of pavement on each side . . . . .	20
30 feet of gravel walk planted with trees on each side . . . . .	60
80 feet in the middle for carriage way . . . .	80
	<hr/>
	160 Feet

The other streets are of the following dimensions viz.

Those leading to public buildings or markets . . . . .	130
Others . . . . .	110

In order to execute the above plan, Mr. Ellicott drew a true Meridional line by celestial observation, which passes through the area intended for the Congress House, this line he crossed by another due East and West, which passes through the same area. These lines are accurately measured, and made the bases on which the whole plan was executed. He ran all the lines by a transit instrument and determined the acute angles by actual measurement, and left nothing to the uncertainty of the compass.

## REFERENCES

- A. THE equestrian figure of GEORGE WASHINGTON, a Monument voted in 1783 by the late Continental Congress.
- B. An historic Column—also intended for a Mile or itinerary Column, from whose station (a mile from the Federal house) all distances of places throughout the Continent to be calculated.
- C. A Naval itinerary Column, proposed to be erected to celebrate the first prize of a Navy and to stand a ready Monument to consecrate its progress and achievements.
- D. This Church is intended for national purposes, such as public prayer, thanksgiving, funeral orations etc. and assigned to the special use of no particular Sect or denomination, but equally open to all. It will be likewise a proper shelter for such monuments as were voted by the late Continental Congress for those heroes who fell in the cause of liberty, and for such others as may hereafter be decreed by the voice of a grateful Nation.
- E. Five grand fountains intended with a constant spout of water. N. B. There are within the limits of the City, above 25 good springs of excellent water abundantly supplied in the driest season of the year.
- F. Grand Cascade, formed of water from the sources of the Tiber.
- G. Public walk, being a square of 1200 feet, through which carriages may ascend to the upper Square of the Federal House.
- H. Grand Avenue, 400 feet in breadth, and about a mile in length, bordered with gardens, ending in a slope from the houses on each side. This Avenue leads to Monument A. and connects the Congress Garden with the

- I. President's park and the
- K. well-improved field, being a part of the walk from the President's house of about 1800 feet in breadth, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile in length. Every lot, deep-colored red with green plots, designates some of the situations which command the most agreeable prospects, and which are the best calculated for spacious houses and gardens, such as may accomodate foreign Ministers etc.
- L. Around this Square and all along the
- M. Avenue from the two bridges to the Federal House, the pavement on each side will pass under an Arched way under whose cover Shops will be most conveniently and agreeably situated. This street is 160 feet in breadth and a mile in length.  
The Squares colored yellow, being fifteen in number, are proposed to be divided among the several States of the Union, for each of them to improve, or subscribe a sum additional to the value of the land; that purpose and the improvements around the Square to be completed in a limited time.

The center of each Square will admit of Statues, Columns, Obelisks, or any other ornament such as the different States may choose to erect: to perpetuate not only the memory of such individuals whose counsels or Military achievements were conspicuous in giving liberty and independence to this Country; but also those whose usefulness hath rendered them worthy of general imitation, to invite the youth of succeeding generations to tread in the paths of those sages, or heroes whom their country has thought proper to celebrate.

The situation of these Squares is such that they are the most advantageously and reciprocally seen from each other and as equally distributed over the whole



City district, and connected by spacious avenues round the grand Federal Improvements and as contiguous to them, and at the same time as equally distant from each other, as circumstances would admit. The Settlements round those Squares must soon become connected.

This mode of taking possession of and improving the whole district at first must leave to posterity a grand idea of the patriotic interest which prompted it.

These figures colored red, are intended for the use of all religious denominations, on which they are to erect places of worship, and are proposed to be allowed to them in the manner as those colored yellow to the different States in the Union, but no burying grounds are to be admitted within the limits of the City, an appropriation being intended for that purpose without.

N. B. There are a number of squares or areas unappropriated, and in situations appropriate for Colleges and Academies and of which every Society whose object is national can be accommodated.

Every house within the City will stand square on the Streets, and every lot, even those on the divergent avenues will run square with their fronts, which on the most acute angle will not measure less than 56 feet and many will be above 140 feet.

In journeying to Philadelphia, L'Enfant had two very definite objects in view: to arrange for the engraving of his " Plan " and to request the President to call a conference in order that certain important points might be discussed for carrying it out. In order for the distinctive character of the " Plan " to be maintained, L'Enfant felt it imperative that there be from the very start a simultaneous development of all the salient features of the city; moreover he had very cogent reasons for desiring the sale of lots to be deferred. The Memoir which accompanied the " Plan " con-

tained a detailed account of his ideas on these different heads.

Owing to the length of the Memoir and its tediousness, the ideas contained in it are given here in condensed form.<sup>37</sup>

Georgetown August 19, 1791.

Sir,

The hight of my ambition is gratified in having met with your approbation in the project of the plan which I now have the honor of presenting to you agreeable to your direction. There still remains the fulfillment of the wish to see the execution of the plan effected to the full attainment of your object.

I shall here beg permission to fix for a moment your attention on a matter which I conceive to be most important for the advancement of the business.

The annexed plan shows the advancement that has been made since your visit.

The business has proved more tedious than at first thought owing to the multiplicity of operations in order to determine the acute angles and intersecting lines with exactness. In this process many difficulties have been encountered on account of the felled timber lying in every direction which the proprietors wish to preserve and are unwilling to remove.

As matters stand—the sites assigned to the Congress House and the President's palace exhibit a sumptuous aspect and claim already the suffrage of crowds of visitors, serving to give a grand idea of the whole. Nevertheless it is greatly to be desired that more be done to render the sale favorable as the beauties of the locality are lost in a chaos of felled timber without the possibility of being able to judge of the relative advantages to be derived from intended improvements, even after inspecting a map.

<sup>37</sup> This Memoir will be found published in full in RECORDS of the Columbia Historical Society, vol. 2; original in Archives P. B. & G.

The grand avenue connecting the palace and the Federal House will be magnificent, with the water of the cascade [falling] to the canal which will extend to the Potomac; as also the several squares which are intended for the Judiciary Courts, the National Bank, the grand Church, the play house, markets and exchange, offering a variety of situations unparalleled for beauty, suitable for every purpose, and in every point convenient, calculated to command the highest price at a sale.

But, as I observed before, a sale this fall is premature, for the land will not bring a tenth part of what it will later. Besides a sale before the general plan is made public and before the whole continent has been notified, will fail through lack of numbers. It will be confined to a few individual speculators who will not be interested to improve the lots; besides the low sale in the first instance may prove injurious to subsequent ones by serving as a precedent. Moreover I apprehend the underselling of lots, far from promoting a speedy settlement will rather disgrace the whole business.

It will, I am convinced, favor a scheme already encouraged in consequence of the small deposit required, of designing men who, in Georgetown in particular, are more active than ever . . . to cross the operation of the plan adopted, and with others . . . to engross the most of the sale and master the whole business. . . .

So far it has been impossible to make equal division of property between the individual owners and the public. . . . they not having returned the survey of their possessions as was repeatedly required of them and which they declined to do until disputes aroused among them respecting the boundary are settled. This precludes for some time proceeding with the work of separation and will prevent devising a mode to effect those lots which will be found laid across the lines of two or three different territories.



I am convinced it will not delay providing for the necessary accomodation of Congress if we proceed to develop the establishment on the Eastern branch of the proposed canal and the other parts . . . . provided that a due attention is given to carrying on in every part those improvements which combine convenience with charm in the outlying situations, as these are meant to lead to the sumptuousness of the more central. When I say ' provided due attention is given ' and though I indulge the idea of soon seeing the establishment become the wonder of all—yet I am sensible of the check its progress may receive and am well persuaded that individual exertion will wait on the spirit in which the public business is conducted.

It being essential to begin well and considering that a relaxation in the forward movement is always more injurious than delay in moving, . . . . I conceive it important not to confine the building idea to erecting a Congress House and a President's palace . . . . other exertions are necessary to set going and to enlarge private undertakings.

If we are to make of this city a fact it will be indispensable to consider every part of the proposed plan as essential . . . . and however unconnected they may appear at first every part should go forward with a proportional degree of despatch.

Whatever will advance mercantile interests should be pushed with the greatest activity ; as the canal from the Tiber to the Eastern branch which is absolutely necessary in order to insure a speedy settlement of that part and to help convey the material to the two grand edifices.

The making of the public walk from under the Federal House to the Potomac and connected with the palace . . . . will be productive of equal advantages with the foregoing as it will give to the city from the very beginning a superior charm over most of those of the world as it will likewise be

an improvement over all in point of convenience of distribution . . . After bringing the various squares to their intended shape, leveling every grand avenue and principal street . . . and extending the improvements in a way to attract settlements thereon, there will be no necessity of hastening to encourage them to chuse the best situations, which it may be well to preserve until the great rise in their value makes it worth the sacrifice.

These ideas . . . which met with your approbation at the beginning, having directed my attention to devising a plan of distribution of localities has made me consider the idea of appropriating several squares to be allotted to each of the several states and also the making a free donation to every particular religious society of ground for a house of worship. A move from which infinite advantage must result.

Betwixt the two edifices, the streets from the grand avenue to the palace and towards the canal will be proper for shops . . . which undoubtedly will increase in a short time to a number sufficient to meet the needs of every one . . . .

Methods so out of the ordinary for developing a town will presumably meet with your opposition and be objected to by others. As it may effect public speculation in public property many will decide against the idea. . . . . but confident that in the end this system will prove best able to promote real prosperity, I feel the more encouraged to submit my ideas thereon to your judgment.

As to the means necessary to secure the success of the system I will observe that however extensive, proportioned to the magnitude of the undertaking, yet I consider the property at your disposal fully proportioned to the object—if attention is given to managing it.

15,000 lots will fall in the share of the public as half of the property left for improvements after deduction is made for streets and for ground appropriated to public uses. These lots will be of various sizes from 66 feet to 37 in front and

from 4 to 7 in an acre. The sum that will arise must be immense but as I observed before—only if it is cautiously managed. For if the most valuable lots are offered on low terms, it would in my opinion prove as destructive to the attainment of the grand object as would a timorous survey tending to lessen the planned measurements . . . . . For to look upon the property at this moment as a source of supply and to use it to defray the first expenses would be to destroy the capital from the very beginning . . . . .

From these considerations, and viewing the matter in this light, being persuaded that money is the wheel to give motion to the machine . . . . I shall now call your attention to the advantages which may be expected from borrowing a sum on the credit of the property itself.

Under the facility of a loan there would be no hurry to dispose of lots, and it would then be possible to appropriate a sum to each particular object so that all could progress regularly and at the same time.

Thus every improvement could be completed without the restraint of petty saving, and every private undertaking could be assisted where a reciprocity of benefit would ensue. This mode of procedure I venture to assert, would in the end bring three to one for the money expended and would raise the reputation of the undertaking to a degree of splendor and greatness unprecedented that would in turn increase the population, develop commerce and in a short time raise the city to one of the first the world contains.

In this manner, and in this manner only, I conceive the business may be brought to a certainty of success. *It was my wish to delineate a plan wholly new* (italics inserted) and which combined on a grand scale will require more than ordinary exertions but not more than is within your power to procure.<sup>38</sup> And as I remain assured you will conceive it

<sup>38</sup> Once again L'Enfant claims the conception of the plan as something entirely original.



essential to pursue with dignity an undertaking of a magnitude so worthy of the concern of a grand empire, I have not hesitated to express myself freely, realizing that the nation's honor is bound up in its complete achievement and that over its progress the nations of the world, watching with eyes of envy, themselves having been denied the opportunity, will stand as judge.

I have the Honor to be with respect and submission, Your  
etc. (Signed) P. C. L'Enfant;

Although we shall never know exactly what were the "sentiments which developed at the conference" (see *supra*, p. 61) spoken of in Jefferson's letter to the Commissioners of August 28th, certain it is that Washington remained unmoved in his determination to support the L'Enfant "plan" not only as to the extent of its grand central scheme but also in regard to its outlying local centers, the latter specially designed to make the city beautiful in all its parts, which were connected by transverse avenues giving "reciprocity of view as well as facility of intercommunication." Jefferson, as seen by his "sketch," had wished from the beginning to eliminate the Carrollsburg landholders (Notley Young and Daniel Carroll of Duddington) and confine the governmental area of the city to what is now known as "foggy bottom," that is to the section of the District lying below Pennsylvania Avenue directly southeast of Georgetown. According to his ideas the Capitol building would have been located in the vicinity of Pennsylvania Avenue and Tenth Street, the President's house near the Naval Hospital, with a public walk connecting them. The rest of the city would then have been left to grow in rectangular fashion without a controlling idea.<sup>39</sup> Washington's acceptance however confined itself to the plan as a whole. The arrangements for carrying it into effect being left to the Commissioners with the concurrence of his Secretary of State whose views were wholly

<sup>39</sup> Dr. J. C. Fitzpatrick, who has given much thought to the plan of the city of Washington, thus interprets Jefferson's "rough sketch."

opposed to those of L'Enfant, it followed that the methods so strongly urged by L'Enfant in the August Report were completely ignored.

After the meeting of the Commissioners with Jefferson and Madison September 9, L'Enfant was informed of the decision to call the Federal city "Washington" and to use the letters of the alphabet and numerals in designating the rectangular streets.<sup>40</sup> A further communication was made to him after a second meeting September 24th, whereby he was directed to employ a hundred and fifty laborers to "throw up clay at the President's house and the houses of Congress . . . and in doing such other work as he should think most proper to have immediately executed."<sup>41</sup>

L'Enfant asked for nothing more in the way of liberty of action than what was implied in the foregoing instruction. With all the energy and zeal at his command he pushed forward the work begun in the several different sections of the city, and directed the operations necessary to procure such success for the oncoming sale of lots as was possible under the circumstances. There is clear evidence in the correspondence of the period that he submitted with cheerfulness to the date of the sale notwithstanding his firm belief that it was premature, and also to the disregard of his foresight regarding the reservation at the sale of the best city lots, holding them until such time as developments at a certain distance from the center should have greatly increased their value. It is likewise to be noted that at this time the most amical relations existed between him and Major Ellicott, as is shown by Ellicott's letters to his wife, and by the following one written L'Enfant before his return to Georgetown:

Territory of Columbia, Sept. 12th 1791.

Dear Sir;

Messrs. Jefferson and Madison left the place Friday last; they appeared well pleased with the plan of the city and the country which it concerns. The Commissioners broke up

<sup>40</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C.

<sup>41</sup> Tindall, p. 122.

last Saturday, after sitting several days. They have ordered the soundings of the Eastern branch to be taken with all convenient speed, and determined that a sale of lots shall take place the 17th of next month. I expected some directions from them respecting the different places where the lots should be laid off but received none; on that head I am at a loss.

The diagonal streets are to receive names but the others are to be distinguished agreeably to the enclosed plan . . . I hope you will be with us soon. Our family all send their respects to you.

I am Sir, your real friend,

Signed) Andrew Ellicott.<sup>42</sup>

While in Philadelphia, L'Enfant had arranged with a French engraver, M. Pigalle, to get out an engraving of the " Plan " before the October sale. Though he himself had strong reasons for objecting to the method decided upon by the Commissioners he had yielded with a very good grace and used every effort to provide them with copies of the " Plan " before the sale. They had ordered 10,000 copies, 300 of which were to be distributed among the States to the northward before the sale.<sup>43</sup> To his great embarrassment M. Pigalle failed to meet his engagement. L'Enfant wrote to the President's Secretary, October 3rd, and received the following reply:

October 6, 1791.

Sir;

. . . . . to my great surprise and mortification M. Pigalle . . . . informed me that he had not been able to get the plate of copper for the engraving . . . till two days ago, and that in consequence it would not be possible for him to have a single plate struck off before the end of the month . . . . he expressed the utmost concern . . . but protested that it was not a fault of his . . . that he had used

<sup>42</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C.; published in RECORDS, vol. 2, p. 132.

<sup>43</sup> L'Enfant Memorials; RECORDS, vol. 2, p. 98.



every means in his power to get it in time . . . I shall call upon him again in the morning and will press him, if it is possible to get some done . . . in almost any manner before the sale, as I am sensible of the great inconvenience you will suffer by being disappointed . . . Nothing in my power to have it effected shall be left undone.

I am Sir,

With great respect and esteem,

Your most Obedt. Servt.

(Signed) Tobias Lear "

All efforts however proved unavailing; there were no copies of the plan at the sale to aid the buyers. Although Washington wrote the Commissioners that he was satisfied L'Enfant was in no wise to blame for this deficiency, they were none the less seriously annoyed. Moreover an incident occurred during the sale which they felt to be an affront to their dignity and which drew upon L'Enfant a first, though indirect, reprimand from the President. The details of what happened are best told by L'Enfant himself as he wrote them the same evening to Mr. Lear who a few days previously had written asking that a lot be secured for him in some favorable spot.

L'Enfant's letter is as follows:

Georgetown, October 19, 1791.

Dear Sir;

The sale of this day having been directed on one part of the city where I thought a lot might suit your purpose, I gave charge to a friend of mine and your countryman, Mr. Cabott, to bid upon your account and am happy he has been able to obtain the lot I had pointed his attention upon at a much lower price than any of the like have sold for—This lot is situated on a south exposition—near public square to that of the President and on a direct avenue from the palace to Government . . . . .

<sup>44</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

As far as the sale has gone it has been middling good considering the excessive badness of the weather which much lessened the concurrences, but however pretty large may be the sum it will procure, I cannot say I am otherwise pleased with it, but in as much as it set the business in a proper train and will undoubtedly give the whole property a value—as is essential to facilitate a loan being made adequate to the work in contemplation.—This sale upon the whole, far from promoting private building as is necessary to make a city and insure the main object will only be making the sacrifice of a number of lots—the loss of which I the more regret on account of their sale having not been conducted with moderation. A reservation of intermedial lots I thought would be expedient and expected the Commissioners would have considered it so—but they apparently being reduced by [illegible] bids have lost sight that the consequences of a sale of the whole lots on the one fronts of a square (*sic*) may in the event prove injurious by diverting from their hands the only means they could secure for forcing at a future time improvements there where the individual proprietor may be interested in delaying them.

Happily the few squares where the lots have been sold, and the small number of other squares that are in readiness for a sale are so situated as to lessen in a great measure the inconveniency of their remaining “as will probably be the case” for ages unimproved—otherwise I should reckon this apparent Success a misfortune. The advantageous price obtained for a number of lots, the less advantage in their local being wholly owing to *the care I took to prevent the exhibition of the general plan at the spot where the sale is made* (italics inserted) must convince that enabling individuals to then compare the situation offered for sale with many others apparently more advantageous would have depreciated the value of those lots that sold the most high. This

being sufficiently evidenced by the events and acknowledged by every individual concerned “ in the property ” the judiciousness of my measure makes me hope the Commissioners would themselves acknowledge the propriety of it *were not a mistaken motive for resentment in my opposition to them to interest their selling contrary to their better judgment* (Italics inserted). The President himself, considering the advantage which resulted from the attention of bidders being confined on the detached plot of the selected situations of each square where a lot was offered for sale—without having in hand any means to compare them with other situations, will the less regret the picture of the plate I had endeavored to procure—and I rest upon your friendship to convince him from the circumstances known by you, how much I regretted the disappointment. Now respecting to this object I am most at a loss what to determine as I consider that this plate, intended only for the sale now becomes useless . . . . . it cannot be completed with that accuracy necessary to make it a map worth sending abroad unless the work is conducted under my eyes, which could not be done until I return to Philadelphia after matters here shall assume winter aspect. If you could advise me what I am to do respecting this I will think it a favor and in the mean while will be obliged to you if you will demand from the engraver every drawing he may have made, and the copper plate he may have begun, to prevent his going forward on private account. He received from me \$30.00 in account which must be above any claim he can make after having failed in delivering the plate as requested. Pardon for the trouble I am giving you.

I am Sir,

With great consideration your

P. S. Mr. ——— [ ? ] who pressed me for a drawing of the city will probably apply to you for the small draft which with



the outlines the engraver has taken from the big map, may enable him to have a copy made answerable to his purpose.<sup>45</sup>

One of the Commissioners, Dr. Stuart, wrote the same day to Washington:

Getown 19th Oct.

Dear Sir;

I have just received your letter and have only time to get enclosed account of our sales made out in time. I have to observe that the general opinion is that the lots have gone too high. The chief purchasers yesterday and the day before were from the Eastward; I am happy to find today that they were intermixed with purchasers from Carolina and Norfolk. You will understand that they are all actual sales excepting about four among the lowest.

The weather has been much against us. Could we have been on the ground and exhibited a general plan, I believe it would have aided the sale considerably. We have thought proper, as the business seemed to flag a little to discontinue the sale; but with notice that if any gentlemen wished to purchase more we should still be ready to receive their offers.

I am dear Sir, Yours etc.

P. S. The squares on which sales are made are some distance from the President's house.<sup>46</sup>

The correspondence regarding this first sale is incomplete, but the above letter shows that the dissatisfaction of the Commissioners with the conduct of L'Enfant came more from a discussion of the subject afterwards than from immediate resentment. On the 30th November, more than a month later, Washington wrote Jefferson regarding the matter:

<sup>45</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>46</sup> Washington Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

More than a year later the Commissioners wrote Mr. Jefferson: "There has been a great want of punctuality in the second payments of those who bought at the first sale, . . . . they have been written to pressingly." (Papers of the District, Vol. I, f. 177)

Mr. L'Enfant's letter of the 19th of October to Mr. Lear—Mr. Lear's answer of the 6th inst (the press copy of which is so dull as to be scarcely legible)—*in which I engrafted sentiments of admonition, and with a view also to feel his pulse under reprehension* (italics inserted)—his reply of the 10th to that letter, together with the papers I put into your hands when here, will give you a full view of the business, and the Major's conduct; and will enable you to judge from the complexion of things how far he may be spoken to in decisive terms without losing his services; *which in my opinion would be a serious misfortune* (italics inserted)—At the same time he must know, there is a line beyond which he will not be suffered to go . . . . .<sup>47</sup>

When Washington wrote the above letter there was more in his mind regarding the Major than what had passed at the October sale of lots; in the mean time the President had been notified by a letter from L'Enfant and by one from Daniel Carroll of Duddington that the latter's house was being torn down.

On November 28, 1791, Washington had written L'Enfant as follows:

Dear Sir;

Your letter of the 21st instant came duly to hand, as did one of the same date from Mr. Carroll of Duddington, on the same subject.—A copy of my answer to the latter is enclosed; by which you will perceive I have proposed an accomodation.—As a similar case cannot happen again (Mr. Carroll's house having been begun before the Federal District was fixed upon) no precedent will be established by yielding a little in the present instance; and it will always be found sound policy to conciliate the good-will rather than provoke the enmity of any man, where it can be accomplished without much difficulty, inconvenience or loss.

<sup>47</sup> RECORDS, Vol. 17, p. 37.

Indeed the more harmoniously this, or any other business is conducted, the faster it will progress, and the more satisfactory it will be.

. . . . . it is . . . moreover exceedingly to be wished, that correct engravings of the city be had, and properly disseminated (at least) throughout the United States before . . . [the next] sale—

A great pressure of business at this time prevents me from adding more than that I am etc.<sup>48</sup>

As the Duddington house plays a major rôle in determining the fate of the Federal city as well as that of L'Enfant the question of its demolition demands thorough elucidation. Up to the present L'Enfant has been accused of ordering the house pulled down because its walls protruded into the street. A careful examination of the "Plan" however shows that Daniel Carroll of Duddington had appropriated for his own purposes an eminence that had been selected from the beginning by L'Enfant, and later approved by the President as one of those focal points essential to the symmetry of the City and whose simultaneous development, up to a certain point, along with the central features of the "Plan" he had urged in the August memorial. It was not therefore a question of moving the house farther back but of its entire elimination from the selected site.<sup>49</sup> In demolishing the house

<sup>48</sup> RECORDS, Vol. 17, p. 36.

<sup>49</sup> In 1790, Daniel Carroll of Duddington, then a young man of twenty-seven, had selected an eminence and begun building himself a mansion house before the site of the Capital had been decided upon, and it had progressed so far that the cellar had been dug and the foundations laid. In June 1791 the walls were begun and the work pushed forward notwithstanding the fact that L'Enfant had warned him that the site was required for one of the leading public squares and therefore his work would have to be torn down. Later he notified him in writing, for the site was precisely the square marked *E* on the "Grand Plan." It was to be adorned with "five grand fountains" with "constant spout of water." Indeed the spring which was to supply the water for the fountains was the very one that had attracted Duddington to the spot and that made him so persistent in remaining there. November 29, 1791 his uncle, Daniel Carroll, the Commissioner, wrote James Madison as follows: "The Major wrote Mr. Carroll in very polite terms to take down his house, being built on public ground. Mr. Carroll for answer informed him that



L'Enfant understood perfectly the legal aspects of the case and took care to keep within the law. Thus the foundation, which had been built before the deed of cession had been signed, belonged to the class of improvement for which the Government engaged to pay; what had gone up since the signing of the deed in April, 1791, was at the owner's risk and not subject to indemnity.

From the first Mr. C. of Duddington and L'Enfant had eyed one another with suspicion; each recognized in the other a will that would bend before no obstacle and their interests were diametrically opposed. Thus a clash was inevitable. L'Enfant had sensed from a very early stage in the work that private interests, so strongly combined on the side of the Commissioners with the two leading proprietors of the Federal District, Notley Young and Daniel Carroll of Duddington,<sup>49a</sup> would inevitably supersede those of the Nation at large unless the utmost care and attention were given. In the beginning he had attempted to avoid the issue by ignoring it. Later however, ever fresh manifestations of par-

---

whenever it should be deemed an obstruction in consequence of building in that part of the city, it should be taken down, and that he had written to the President on the subject . . . . " — Madison Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>49a</sup> Daniel Carroll of Duddington, through the early death of his father had at majority come into possession of a vast estate inherited from his grandmother (nee Rozier), who had left an equal amount of property to his half-uncle, Notley Young. This latter gentleman lived in a large manor house in what is now Washington, S. W., at that time a plantation worked for him by more than two hundred slaves. Notley Young had married for second wife a sister of Daniel Carroll, the commissioner, and his eldest daughter by a first wife was married to Robert Brent whose mother was another sister of the Commissioner and whose father was part owner with a brother, George Brent, of the Aquia Quarries which L'Enfant had been ordered to purchase. Nor was this all, for Duddington's father, who belonged to the other branch of the Carrolls (cousin of Charles Carroll the Signer), was brother-in-law to the Commissioner (the latter having married his sister). Besides this, Duddington had taken to wife Ann Brent (cousin of Robert) whose mother was still another sister of the Commissioner. In this connection it is of paramount interest to note that though the Brent-Carroll-Young combination proved too strong for L'Enfant, since Washington joined forces with them, yet it was their descendants who later took the poverty-stricken but distinguished French engineer into their home and cared for him till his death; for William Dudley Digges, on whose estate L'Enfant breathed his last, was son of Catherine Brent (sister of Robert) who was niece of the Commissioner Daniel Carroll; and Mr. Digge's wife was Eleanor, eldest daughter of Daniel Carroll of Duddington, who was an infant in arms at the time her father's house was demolished in 1791.

tiality on the part of the Commissioners had angered him and there soon grew up a mutual distrust and aversion that deepened as time went on.<sup>50</sup> To the President, who had approved the plan of the city, the Commissioners showed nothing but submission, but in reality resentment was felt for avenues and spacious public squares taken from property belonging to kinsmen. As L'Enfant was responsible for the magnitude of the "Plan," it is quite certain they wished to disembarass themselves of him and that they hoped then to induce the President to permit important changes that would reduce the extravagant outlay.

Since his return from Philadelphia in September, L'Enfant had made many trips up and down the country buying different kinds of building material needed for the city, while his overseer, the young engineer Isaac Roberdeau, carried forward the actual work according to detailed directions from L'Enfant.

In order to complete the purchase of the Aquia Quarries, L'Enfant made a final trip to Virginia starting out the 23rd of November. On that day he dined with Mr. Notley Young and accepted a commission from one of the ladies to carry a letter to a relative at the place whither he was going. It was at this time that the demolition of the Duddington house was begun. Two days earlier the Major had written the Commissioners:

Georgetown, Nov. 21, 1791

In pursuance of the measures first taken and of which I took the liberty of informing you by last post respecting the house of Mr. Carroll of Duddington which may become necessary to have destroyed, he not having acquiesced to proceed himself as requested to the demolishing—In lieu of answering my last summons having set out on a journey—I directed yesterday forenoon a number of hands to the spot and employed with them some of the principal people who had worked in raising the house to the end that every possible

<sup>50</sup> L'Enfant was not the only one who felt the opposition of the two proprietors above named. It will be remembered that Jefferson had wished to restrict the governmental area to the vicinity of Georgetown because of the attitude of the Carrollsburg landowners. (See *supra*, p. 72.)

attention be paid to the interests of the gentleman as shall be consistent in forwarding the public object.

The roof is already down with part of the brickwork and the whole will I expect be leveled to the ground before the week is over; this operation facilitating the laying out of that part of the city as is proper to close the process of this and prepare for the next campaign. My wish to avail of the good weather still continuing has induced me to prevail on Mr. Ellicott to remain here a fortnight longer, . . . . . wishing to take every possible advantage of the season I cannot see [to] the various other objects which demand I should also give an immediate attention, . . . without regretting the want of possibility . . . . . so as to effect both at once. A complete engraving of the plan and complete drawing and copy of the grand plan are two objects impossible to effect here and cannot be overturned to them unless I spare the grand plan by which the operations here are to be regulated and unless I leave the business here to pursue in Philadelphia objects which I conceive you are most desirous of—the one for the information of the public, the other to be handed to Congress—Neither of these can be done without I can spare the original map which will be wanted here until the work before mentioned is completed, nor can it well be effected without I am in a situation to direct the work a circumstance the consideration of which leads me to accelerate the completion of all that requires my attendance so that work may be mapped out for the hands [so] that [they] may be continuing in employment through the whole winter—

[Remainder of manuscript missing.] <sup>51</sup> To this letter the Commissioners replied:

Sir;

Ge town Nov. 26, 1791.

On our meeting this day we were equally surprised and concerned to find that you had proceeded to demolish Mr.

<sup>51</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).



Carroll's house. We were impelled by many considerations to give immediate directions to those acting in your absence to desist.—We must observe to you, that allowing the measure to have been absolutely necessary, and such an one as Mr. Carroll might be compelled to acquiesce in from the terms he entered into, still our opinion ought to have been previously taken on a subject so delicate and so interesting.

We are Sir,

Your obt. serts.

(Signed) David Stuart

Daniel Carroll Commissioners <sup>52</sup>

In the meantime the Commissioners had notified the President of all that had happened. Daniel Carroll, moreover, in a series of letters to James Madison, each following the other only a few days apart, expressed freely the distress not unmingled with alarm which the whole case caused him.<sup>53</sup>

December first Jefferson wrote as follows to the President :

Th. Jefferson presents his respects to the President and sends him a draft of letters to Major L'Enfant and the Commissioners prepared on a conference with Mr. Madison. Perhaps the former may be too severe. It was observed however, that the President's sentiments conveyed to him through Mr. Lear, were serious and ought to have produced an effect on him, he gave them the go-by in his letter in answer, and shows that he will not regard correction, unless it be pointed.<sup>54</sup>

The letter to L'Enfant which Washington sent next day with some slight changes from the wording of the draft and to which he added two much more kindly paragraphs, makes the following explicit statement :

I wished you to be employed in the arrangements of the Federal city.—I still wish it ; but only on condition that you

<sup>52</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>53</sup> See Madison Letters, L. C. (Unpublished).

<sup>54</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

can conduct yourself in subordination to the authority of the Commissioners, to whom by law the business is entrusted, and who stand between you and the President of the United States . . . . .<sup>55</sup>

The two letters of L'Enfant which follow were doubtless written before Washington's second letter was received. The first is to the Commissioners:

Georgetown December 6th 1791.

Gent—

On my return from Acquia where I have made purchase of a quarry ground conformably to what had been agreed at your previous meeting—I received your favor of the 26th Nov. informing me you had given direction to the gentlemen acting in my absence to desist from demolishing a house Mr. Carroll of Duddington was about building.

Conceiving from this circumstance you supposed these gentlemen were acting of their own accord, or that you must have lost sight of the peculiar circumstance condemning the undertaking of Mr. Carroll of D.—I must here in justice to these gentlemen certify that I had given them positive order for pulling down the house, the removal of which had become necessary and wishing you not to misconceive the motives which had determined me to the measure and which have made me pursue in it with steady activity since my return to this place, I will state to you the following particulars.

The peculiar circumstances attending the undertaking of Mr. Carroll of Duddington—together with his manifest disposition to contravene his engagement and to oppose the progress of operations—being sufficiently known you could not but be satisfied I acted with propriety on proceeding as I have done. Had that house been one of those improvements

<sup>55</sup> See RECORDS, Vol. 17, p. 39, for letter in full. This letter is the first official notice to L'Enfant of the new status which he was to be required to assume.

the removal of which in compliance with the contract between the individual and the public would have required a provisory estimate of its value, I would doubtless referred the circumstance to your Board and would have suspended the operation until matters had been adjusted between you and the individual concerned—but this not being necessary in the case of Mr. Carroll a different mode of process was expedient and proper and the mode I have pursued, it must be allowed, has been more delicate than his right to expect, having offered him a fair opportunity to oppose—at least to contest an immediate operation. I wrote to him twice stating the circumstances and the obligation I was under “as charged with the execution of the plan” to proceed to the demolishing of the house in case he should decline or delay availing himself of the alternative I offered him to effect this himself.

It was him (*sic*) then, if he thought himself wrongly used, who ought to have required the interference of your Board—but it was not my business to call your attention on the matter. Besides I could not at the time have done this with any propriety—since on a former occasion when a foresight of the circumstance in which this house has finally been found to stand—induced me to intimate my opinion of the propriety of using with it as I have done—one of you gentlemen, Mr. Daniel Carroll, declared that if a question was put respecting that business, for the Board to determine upon, he would *not here act as Commissioner* (italics inserted); as at the moment I proceeded only two of you being available to be called together, Mr. D. Carroll could not consistently with his declaration take up the matter. As a single member [does not] constitute a Board, nothing could have been determined.

It was necessary and expedient that the measure should be proceeded to with alacrity. It was proper—as I proceeded to it of right and with as much confidence as in directing a



tree to be cut down or a rock to be removed where obstructive to the operation or impediments in the streets.

If the way of process “ in any of these cases ” a trespass has been made on any of the individuals as injurious, it is to me, not to the persons employed, to whom opposition is to be made—and in every of my steps in regard to the public as well as to the individual rights—complaints from whatever quarter they may come—when founded on reason—have and will ever meet me ready to redress & whenever the matter will be of a nature as to require your interference you will always find me disposed to respect the authority vested in you by law.

In this instance the magnitude of the object to remove . . . [alone] constituted its importance—The novelty of the case has, I conceive, raised your apprehensions and I take account how one of the gentlemen of your Board, close connection of Mr. Carroll of Duddington, must have interested you . . . [in] the event and led you to consider the undertaking delicate and of consequence for you to determine upon.

After mature consideration you will no doubt have conceived the matter in a more proper light—you will have see[n] that since effecting the removal was a measure no way hazarded nor contestable, no occasion was for me to refer the measure to your consideration—and as I doubt not you have as much at heart the speedy advancement of the great work on hand as I have, I trust you will see the propriety of your never interfering with the process of execution, but in case when an appeal to you from individuals may be justly grounded.<sup>56</sup> For it is constant that in other cases

<sup>56</sup> Undoubtedly this lesson given by L'Enfant in no wise strengthened his position with the Commissioners. The President alone could have successfully administered it. Had Washington at this time been less heavily burdened and had he had more sympathetic advisors, an equipoise between the two elements might have been maintained. In this connection a modern instance, somewhat similar, is that of

it would answer to no other end but that of lengthening the operation in disaffecting the people employed.

In the present case of Mr. D. Carroll of Duddington it would only have served as a precedent to others to contest every step of the people employed in laying out the city, the progress of which has already been materially impeded in consequence of the strict attention which has been paid in preparing (where ever possible) every convenience to an individual proprietor.

The building of Mr. C. of D. was erected in contrariety (*sic*) to the plan adopted and throwing it down was doing justice to all individuals concerned in the prosperity within the city and it has been effected without a violation of a right of property; a difference and a wide one too being to be made in the case of that house, from that of touching a man's property without his consent.

This exposal of the considerations and reasons which has and ever will be made the rule of my conduct, being wholly to convince you that I have acted consistently—I hope from this explanation . . . that nothing in future will intervene to disturb the harmony and good understanding which it is desirable may prevail amongst all the concerned in so interesting a work.

I have the honor to be

P. S. I have ordered the rubbish to be cleared out of the foundation of the house demolished and directed this foundation should remain for your inspection. As that part of the building having been raised previous to the compact between the public and individuals Mr. C. is entitled to a reimbursement for that part. I request therefore you will

---

Roosevelt and the Panama Canal. When General Goethals found progress impossible, since every move had to be submitted to the Commissioners, he sent a messenger to the President asking what he should do. Roosevelt answered: "I sent you down to build the canal. I want it built. Do what you consider necessary to this end and report afterwards to the Commissioners."

settle with him for that foundation which it is necessary should be soon removed.<sup>57</sup>

Next day L'Enfant wrote as follows answering Washington's letter of November 28th:

Georgetown Dec. 7, 1791.

Sir;

An absence of ten days from this place having prevented me from receiving the honor of your letter of the 28th Nov. until last evening I returned from a journey to Richmond and Acquia where I had been called to close a bargain for a quarry ground I have made the purchase of for the public. I beg this may apologize for my not having answered yours immediately as I should have done had it come sooner to my hand—for judging from the contents of your letter that a second from me had not come to your hand when you answered that of M. Carroll of Duddington—I regret the circumstance and wish I might have explained to you the reason which determined me to proceed as rapidly as I have done in the demolishing of that house—since I find that its being destroyed will in some respects oppose your paternal goodness. Worthless [L'Enfant evidently means *unworthy*] as is the individual who claims relief against his own folly, to benefit from it and hard as it would be to my feelings to see his and his prompter succeed, were it in my power I would redress the matter conformably to your wish. Under impossibility of doing this my regret is tempered from a trust that you are sufficiently satisfied [that] I proceeded from principle consistent with the first steps I had taken and that I did not determine to those steps without having considered.

What I have done on this occasion above all other which merited me your sanction, has been both expedient and

<sup>57</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C.; Tindall, pp. 134-135.



proper—expedient, because [the] necessity for the house being removed [being granted] making short work of the business was the only mode of insuring its removal, which every candid uninterested judge will, and every person who may have observed the moderation of my conduct through from the beginning of this affair, will allow to have been effected with more attention to the interest of the matter concerned, than his own proceeding in raising that house in opposition to the progress of the plan . . . and in contempt to the advice and of the authority under which they were given, could entitle him to. The measure I say was also proper because *the circumstances of that house being absolutely different from that of any other*, the loca[tion] of which . . . [should have been] first investigated by the Commissioners . . . . *there was no more necessity for applying to them than there is to call for their sanction in cutting down a tree* (italics inserted)<sup>58</sup> this house as I observed before, having grown like a bush in the way of the people clearing the ground . . . . . it would have afforded a dangerous precedent to others to contest every step of the people employed in laying off the city and whose progress has already been materially slackened in consequence of that strict attention which has been paid in preserving as much as was admissible all convenience to the individual proprietors; all of whom, except those connected with Daniel Carroll of Duddington have evinced their satisfaction of the justice of my conduct . . . . .

Moreover Sir, had the case been of that nature as would have required the sanction of the Commissioners there was no board of them to whom I could consistently bring the matter to a fair investigation. Mr. Stuart and Mr. Carroll could, it will be said, be easily called together but I must in justification for . . . . not having communicated the matter

<sup>58</sup> See *infra*, p. 94.

to . . . them state that I could not . . . [have done so] consistently . . . because on a former occasion when a foresight of the circumstance . . . . had induced me to intimate my idea of the propriety of the measure . . . of clearing away that house . . . . Mr. Carroll had made a positive declaration that if the affair was referred to the Board he would not act as Commissioner but would appear as a party in favor of Mr. Carroll of Duddington. . . . .

Having hastened my return to meet all the adversaries waiting for me—a respect for the law as well as a confidence in the goodness of my cause has lead me to the determination of submitting to the sheriff,<sup>59</sup> who has been three days waiting for me. To this moment however, I have neither seen him nor Mr. Carroll . . . . . what was left standing of the house after the hands were ordered from it . . . . concurring with my just resentment . . . . . determining me to complete the destruction contrary to what I perceive is your demand of me . . . . . [end wanting].<sup>60</sup>

Three days later L'Enfant again wrote the President, having in the meantime received his letter of December 2nd. This letter of L'Enfant has not been preserved; one can judge however that Washington's "pointed correction"<sup>61</sup> produced no more effect than had the indirect reprimand conveyed through Mr. Lear. The letter of December 13th, although calculated to be a stunning blow, failed equally to impress him. L'Enfant simply could not believe it had emanated from the President and did not even attempt to understand it. With the exception of the final communication in February, Washington never addressed L'Enfant again. He wrote:

<sup>59</sup> Daniel Carroll of Duddington having gone to Annapolis for advice had "obtained an injunction in chancery to stop proceedings with a summons . . . for the Major to appear at Annapolis in December." Letter of Nov. 29, 1791 from Daniel Carroll to James Madison. The summons was never served. See Madison Papers, L. C. (Unpublished).

<sup>60</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished.)

<sup>61</sup> Letter of December 2nd. See *supra*, p. 84. RECORDS, Vol. 17, p. 40.

Philadelphia, Dec. 13th 1791.

Sir;

I have received your letter of the 7th instant, and can only once more, and now for all, inform you, that every matter and thing which has relation to the federal district, and the city within it, is committed to the Commissioners appointed agreeably to the "Act for establishing the temporary and permanent seat of Government of the United States" that it is from them you are to derive your powers—and the line of demarcation is to be drawn by them.

You may remember, Sir, that the first official notice of the business in which you are now engaged, was from one of these Commissioners—namely Mr. Carroll; and that a supposed impropriety in his acting whilst a member of Congress, occasioned a suspension, until a renewal of his commission, after his term of service in that body had expired.

Had it not been for this circumstance, all the directions you would have received on your way to Georgetown would have been from him.—All you have received since ought to have been from them.

This is why I have said to you in a former letter, that the "Commissioners stand between you and the President of the United States,"—they being the persons from whom alone you are to receive your directions.—

Were it necessary I would again give it to you as my opinion, that the Commissioners have every disposition that can be desired to listen to your suggestions—to adopt your plans—and to support your authority for carrying the latter into effect, as far as it shall appear reasonable, just & prudent to them, and consistent with the powers under which they act themselves. But having said this in more instances than one it is rather painful to reiterate it.—With esteem and regard I am, &c.

P. S. Since writing the foregoing letter, yours of the 10th is come to hand.—As you are well acquainted with mine, as



well as the earnest wishes of the Commissioners, to have the work forwarded with all the dispatch the nature of it will admit, I persuade myself that nothing will be wanting on your part, or the part of Mr. Ellicott, to hasten the execution.—

G. W.<sup>62</sup>

L'Enfant was not wrong in believing that the blow aimed at him through the President emanated from another source. The following communication written by Jefferson shows that Washington had asked for the advice of his Secretary of State who thus analyzes the case as presented by L'Enfant.

*Observations on Major L'Enfant's letter of Dec. 7th, 1791 to the President justifying the demolition of the house of Mr. Carroll of Duddington.*

He [L'Enfant] says that ' Mr. Carroll erected his house partly on a main street, & altogether on ground to which the public had a more immediate title than himself could claim.'

When blaming Mr. Carroll, then he considers this as a street, but when justifying himself he considers it not yet as a street, for, to account for his not having pointed out to Carroll a situation where he might build, he says, ' the President had not yet sanctioned the plan for the distribution for the city, nor determined if he would approve the situation of the several areas proposed to him in the plan for public use, & that I would have been highly to have been blamed to have anticipated his opinion thereon.'

This latter exculpation is solid, the first without foundation. The plan of the city has been not yet definitely determined by the President. Sales to individuals or partitions 'decide the plan as far as these sales or partitions go. A deed, with the whole plan annexed, executed by the President and recorded, will ultimately fix it. But till a sale or

<sup>62</sup> RECORDS, Vol. 17, p. 40.

partition or deed it is open to alteration. Consequently there is no such thing as a street adjacent to the lots actually sold or divided; the erection of a house in any part of the ground cannot yet be a *nuisance* in law. Mr. Carroll is tenant in common of the soil with the public, and the erection of a house by a tenant in common on the common property is no nuisance. Mr. Carroll has acted imprudently, intemperately, foolishly; but he has not acted illegally. There must be an establishment of streets before his house can become a nuisance in the eyes of the law. Therefore till that establishment neither Major L'Enfant nor the Commissioners would have had a right to demolish his house without his consent.

The Major says he had as much right to *pull down a house as to cut down a tree* (italics inserted). [Compare with what L'Enfant actually said: "*the circumstance of this house being absolutely different from any other . . . there was no more necessity for applying to them (the Commissioners), than there is to call for their sanction in cutting down a tree*" (italics inserted).]

This is true if he has received no authority to do either. But still there will be this difference. To cut down a tree or to demolish a house in the soil of another is trespass. But the cutting of a tree in this country is so slight a trespass, that a man would be thought litigious who should prosecute it; if he prosecuted civilly, a jury would give small damages; if criminally, the judge would punish heavily by fine and imprisonment. In the present case if Carroll was to bring a civil action the jury would probably punish his folly by small damages; but if he were to prosecute criminally the judge would probably vindicate the insult on the laws and the breach of the peace by heavy fine and imprisonment, so that if Major L'Enfant is right in saying he had as much authority to pull down a house as to cut down a tree, still he would feel a difference in the punishment of the law.

But is he right in saying that he had as much right to pull down a house as to cut down a tree. I do not know what have been the authorities given him *expressly*, or by *implication*, but I can very readily conceive that the authorities which he has received, whether from the President or from the Commissioners, whether verbal or written, may have gone to the demolition of trees, & not of houses. I am sure he has received no authority either from the President or Commissioners, either expressly or implicitly, to pull down houses. An order to him to mark on the ground the lines of the streets & lots, might imply an order to remove trees or *small* obstructions *where they insuperably prevented his operations*; but a person must know little of geometry, who could not, in an open field, designate streets and lots, even where a line passed through a house, without pulling the house down.

In truth the blame on Majr L'Enfant is for having pulled down the house of his own authority and when he had occasion to believe he was in opposition to the sentiments of the President [illegible] & his fault is aggravated by its having been done to gratify private resentment against Mr. Carroll, and most palpably not because it was necessary; and the style in which he writes the justification of his act, shows that a continuation of the same resentment renders him still unable to acquiesce under the authority from which he had been reproved.

He desires a line of demarcation between his office and that of the Commissioners.<sup>63</sup>

What should be this line? and who is to draw it? If we consider the matter under the *act of Congress* only, the President has power only to name the Commissioners, and to approve or disapprove certain proceedings of theirs.

<sup>63</sup> This request of L'Enfant evidently belonged to the part of the letter which is wanting. See *supra*, p. 91.



They have the whole executive power, and stand between the President and the subordinate agents. In this view; they may employ or dismiss, order or countermand, take on themselves such part of the execution as they please, and assign other parts to subordinate agents; consequently, under the *act of Congress their will is the line of demarcation between subordinate agents, while no such line, can exist between themselves and their agents* (italics inserted).

Under the deed from the Proprietors to the President, his powers are much more ample. I do not accurately recollect the tenor of the deed; but I am pretty sure it was such as to put more ample power into the hands of the President, and to commit to him the whole execution of whatever is to be done under the deed, and this goes particularly to the laying out of the town, so that as to this *the President is certainly authorized to draw the line of demarcation between L'Enfant and the Commissioners* (Italics inserted). But I believe there is no necessity for it. As far as I have been able to judge, from conversations and consultations with the Commissioners, I think they are disposed to follow implicitly the will of the President, whenever they can find it out. But L'Enfant's letters do not breathe the same moderation or acquiescence: and I think it would be much safer to say to him 'the orders of the Commissioners are your line of demarcation,' than by attempting to define his powers, to give him a line where he may meet with the Commissioners foot to foot, and chicane & raise opposition to their orders whenever he thinks they pass his line.

I confess, that on view of L'Enfant's proceedings and letters latterly, I am thoroughly persuaded that to render him useful, his temper must be subdued; and that the only means of preventing him giving constant trouble to the President, *is to submit him to the unlimited control of the Commissioners*. We know the discretion & forbearance with which they will exercise it.

Th. Jefferson, Dec. 11, 1791.<sup>64</sup>

A few days later Washington sent the following note to Jefferson enclosing the letter to L'Enfant of Dec. 13th already given:

Phila. Dec. 14th, 1791

Dear Sir,

I am very glad to find that matters, after all that has happened, stand so well between the Commissioners and Majr. L'Enfant.—I am sorry however to hear that the work is not in a more progressive state.

Yesterday afternoon I wrote a letter, of which the enclosed is the copy to Majr. L'Enfant.—and receiving his of the 10th, added the Postscript thereto.—I hope the two will have a good effect.

I am always with great regard,

Yr. Affectionate

(Signed) Ge Washington.<sup>65</sup>

If L'Enfant failed to grasp the meaning of Washington's letter of December 13, which told him such a strange tale about his having been engaged by Daniel Carroll and which reiterated the announcement of Dec. 2nd "the Commissioners stand between you and the President of the United States"<sup>65a</sup> he did not judge wrongly of the real attitude of the President towards him, for Washington's expression of satisfaction in the letter just quoted, proves how sincerely he was attached to his artist-engineer. No wonder then that L'Enfant considered that he had won his point, especially as the Commissioners said nothing more to him about the house, as they were friendly and as all action against him was dropped. With renewed energy therefore he pushed forward preparations for the winter work. On December 16th he wrote to his faithful lieutenant Roberdeau:

My dear Sir,

Your activity and zeal in forwarding your share of the work done in the Federal City this last season making me

<sup>64</sup> Published in the Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Memorial Edition, Vol. VIII, p. 158.

<sup>65</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>65a</sup> See *supra*, p. 92.

hope you will cheerfully continue giving your attendance throughout the whole winter & see that all the hands employed do their work with assiduity as far as the intemperry (*sic*) of the season will allow. While I shall remain absent I have to recommend to your particular care the following objects: viz.

To repair immediately to Acquia Creek to see the quarries there belonging to the public—to have barracks erected thereon for twenty men on each of these quarries; viz., on the island purchased from Mr. George Brent & on that rented from Mr. John Gibson of Dumphries . . . . .

The exporting of stone must be begun at once on both quarries; they must be opened at once all round the island and on the main[land], on the whole front adjoining to the creek. The stone must be taken down as it comes and of any size and in as great quantity as the time will admit, recommending only that when the rock will be found sound and free from stain that blocks of stone be extracted therefrom of the largest size every way as is possible.

When arrived at Philadelphia I shall send you the particular dimensions of some stone—but without waiting let the hands do the most they can—when the weather shall prove too severe let them busy themselves in clearing away the rubble and as soon and as often as it moderates let them set about extracting the stones—

As to what is to be done in the city, the first object must be building barracks for 600 or 800 men in four different positions—on the Federal square or contiguous to it where most convenient for water—for 100 men; on the President's square-do- for 100 men; near the mouth of Rock Creek for 50 men; central to the two grand buildings and at projecting of the intended canal for 100 men; on the grand square above the market barracks for the commissary, store for provisions etc. and opposite for men.—



The timber necessary for this you may take from Mr. L—wood he having agreed to receive payment for what shall be employed and for a fair valuation thereof. Mr. Burns also proposes to let us have all the wood that will be necessary for the use of the commissary & at 8 s. the cord. This matter I beg you will arrange so that no difficulties arise and no wasting of wood takes place.

Axe-men must also be kept in constant employment in cutting down and clearing timber from the streets that are now run and where ever the individual proprietors will agree to preserve the trunks of trees, these trunks must be [laid] lengthly way on the side of the street so as to leave a free passage.

Diggers must also be set about digging on the Federal Square carrying a level across of that part laid out for the building—the area of which must be excavated to the level of the lowest part of the ground in the ditch as it now stands; wheelbarrows for this will be necessary—Mr. Cabot has taken charge of having a few made. Enquire for them of Mr. Green and apply to the Commissioners for them to hasten the contract for a number which I will require them to procure.

In all matters which will require supply of money or of provisions send a retuen (*sic*) of your wants to the Commissioners, but if they were absent or that in the execution of this order some delay should appear, let nothing interfere with the work; it must be pursued without interruption. With 40 or 50 men in the city, and twenty-five in the quarries, until I shall write you what further may be done when the season shall be more advanced.

You will not forget the timber wheel and if you know any person who will be willing to contract for working 100 or 200 wheelbarrows introduce the person to the Commissioners.

I hope to receive information of what may occur to you of the progress of the work—and will at all times be happy of hearing from you.

I am

with friendship and regard,

(Signed) P. C. L'Enfant.<sup>66</sup>

As L'Enfant had pointed out in his letter to the President, relations with the other proprietors had all along been friendly in character. The pleasure he took in forwarding whatever was for their interest is clearly shown in the following letter to Mr. Burnes:<sup>67</sup>

Georgetown, Dec. 21, 1791.

Dear Sir;

Agreeable to your request of yesterday the square on the which you desire to erect a house will be marked out so as to enable you to proceed as conveniently and as immediately as you please in laying the foundation. Should the manufacture of the quantity of brick you propose making require more clay than will come out of the foundation you may safely dig out of the street the quantity you want . . . providing you erect all your brick kiln within the area of the square on which your building is to stand.

This square . . . will border on one of the main diagonal avenues to the President's palace. It will have a front on part of the square of the palace & will also view on the grand park . . . so that it will be worth your attention to have the house of a proper dimension of fronts and in every respect combined conformably with the plan of intended improvements because you are to consider that the house in helping the advancement of these improvements will accelerate the rise of value of your other property, and

<sup>66</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>67</sup> The same of whom Washington wrote, "*even the obdurate Mr. Burnes*" (an expression which has become famous).

besides that it being eligibly situated, well-contrived & with a convenient distribution . . . will enable you to rent it or dispose of it to better advantage.

As I suppose it will be your wish to reserve the whole of the area of the square upon which you will build, this will be perfectly at your option by your resigning “ in exchange ” to the public an area of equal dimensions on the opposite diagonal avenue . . . . I should be glad Sir, to know your determination on this and if you agree to fix your house so as to make it a contribution to the execution of the proposed improvements I will with pleasure design for you a plan combined with those improvements and will besides attend to the construction & in all parts where the public may derive some advantage from your exertions you may rest assured of being assisted, and that whatever ornamental work will be necessary for the outside . . . shall be effected without incurring you in expense beyond what you shall have fixed upon and as shall be adequate to the object you propose.

I have the honor to be etc.

P. C. L’Enfant.<sup>68</sup>

With exactly the same air of easy assurance the Major approached the thorny subject of Notley Young’s house. He wrote to the Commissioners:

Georgetown Dec. 22, 1791.

Gentlemen;

One of the streets lately to be run being unavoidable to strike on the house of Mr. Notley Young and of course render it a nuisance in the city—I have the honor of informing you of the circumstance & to request you may adjust matters with Mr. Notley Young so as to insure the house may be removed when necessary; I see no necessity at present to proceed immediately to the removal—because that house lay on

<sup>68</sup> L’Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).



the extreme end of a street and can in no way interfere with the operation of the street; tho in a main avenue leading to one of the principal public squares . . . there is no probability of a speedy settlement taking place—therefore it will be sufficient at present to notify Mr. Notley Young that his house will be subject to be removed at a period which I conceive may safely be fixed at 7 years—postponing to that time the evaluation . . . as it will be much more to the advantage of the public and equally just to the proprietor concerned to defer this until the time of the removal . . . as the natural decay of the building will diminish its value.

Should however Mr. Notley Young be willing to engage to rebuild another house in a situation where the aspect may benefit the general improvement of the city, I should be of opinion that in that case it would be policy to settle with him for the value of his house as it now stands, as the public would receive from his new improvement a full compensation for the difference in the money to be paid, if evaluated from seven years hence.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,

P. S. I have written to Mr. Notley Young on the subject, giving him my idea on what I conceive may be his interest to determine upon & should that your arrangement with him may soon take place so as that I may be able to see what proper situation for him in the part of the city where he may pitch upon . . .

P. C. L.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>69</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished). One cannot help sympathizing with Notley Young whose buildings and grounds were extensive enough to be valued by the city at £15,000. On Jan. 7, 1792, he wrote the Commissioners: “. . . I had as I thought a well grounded expectation that the Plan would be so ordered as to leave me in an eligible situation with respect to the spot I delighted in, and where I now reside . . . what has happened a few days past, proves it was wrongly placed, for upon opening a street my house is found to be entirely on it.” (Letters to the Commissioners, Vol. 1.)

Although the Commissioners had outwardly accepted L'Enfant's reasoning regarding his actions in connection with the Duddington house, in reality they were deeply annoyed not only by his manner of proceeding but still more, as has already been shown, by the plan itself and the scale of magnificence on which it was drawn. The above letter regarding Notley Young's house brought back to them all their annoyance and roused anew their fears. Three days later came another letter from L'Enfant asking for supplies for the winter work, which read as follows:

Georgetown, Dec. 25, 1791.

Gentlemen;

Mr. Roberdeau, on whose activity and zeal I rely in the execution of what is necessary to accomplish this winter, will communicate to you a statement of the business I committed to his care and I have to request you will make provision for the supply of 25 hands in the quarries and 50 in the city which in all will be 75 men kept in employment besides their respective overseers.

There is an immediate necessity for a number of wheelbarrows and above 100 will be wanted early in the spring. Therefore I beg you will devise the mode of obtaining that number before the 15th of March next—These wheelbarrows ought to be made light and should be only roughly finished, though substantial.

I have the honor to be . . . .<sup>70</sup>

Very soon after writing the above letter L'Enfant repaired to Philadelphia to personally superintend the engraving of the "Plan." Before leaving Georgetown, he had requested Benjamin Ellicott (brother of Andrew), "to delineate on paper all that had been done in the city" so that he could make this accurate statement "the basis of the drawing of the remainder."<sup>71</sup> Exactly what happened cannot

<sup>70</sup> Draft preserved in L'Enfant Papers, L. C. Papers of the District, L. C., Vol. I (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>71</sup> See RECORDS, Vol. 2, p. 194.

today be ascertained except that the drawing when made was not given to L'Enfant and he had left asking that it be sent to him.<sup>72</sup>

In the meantime the situation around the city and in Georgetown had become tense owing to the general dissatisfaction of every body with every thing. There were disputes between the people of Carrollsburg and those of the region bordering on Rock Creek; there were disputes about the boundary line and about appropriation of the land for public purposes; the question of building wharves and other improvements was hotly agitated among the proprietors in the different localities, each jealous of advantages that might detract from the value of their particular locations. In all the Commissioners were unavoidably concerned and came in for a great deal of criticism, especially when obvious partiality towards family interests was shown. Irritated by all this, annoyed at L'Enfant's methods of procedure, and still more by the loyalty of his men, the Commissioners decided upon a drastic move intended to bring matters to a crisis. They wrote concerning what they had done in the following restrained manner to the President:

Georgetown, January 9, 1792.

. . . . .

From what we collect from the commissary of provisions, there are about 75 laborers and their overseers in the city, and . . . Major L'Enfant has ordered 25 of them to be withdrawn from thence to be employed in the stone quarry under the direction of Mr. I. Roberdeau who left Georgetown on that business, though previously told by two of the Commissioners and by the third on the way, that his presence was desired at the meeting; and we have reason to believe that he thus proceeded to avoid orders from us . . . . .

<sup>72</sup> In a pencilled note, today scarcely legible, traced on the margin of the last letter written him by Washington (see *infra*, p. 154 n.), L'Enfant attributes to the Commissioners a design to withhold these drawings which they soon after authorized Ellicott to use in the preparation of the engraved plan which was allowed to go forth under the latter's name.



Independent of this mortifying treatment we think it advisable, from the nature of the season, to put every thing for the present at least, on piece work, and to discharge the hands engaged on time wages and provisions, and employed on digging; for though pains were taken on our part to get brick clay turned up this fall, we have no knowledge or reason to believe that a spade of clay has been turned up for that purpose, but the labor directed to other objects which may correspond with Major L'Enfant's designs respecting the Capitol and Palace, but we do not conceive that there is certainty enough of the adoption of unprepared plans to warrant the digging of long, deep, wide ditches in the midst of winter, which if necessary at all might be done much cheaper in any other season. These impressions, though we wished to avoid a step in Major L'Enfant's absence which he might possibly think wanting in delicacy, have occasioned us to discharge the hands . . .<sup>73</sup>

The story as told by Roberdeau in a series of letters to his chief is as follows:

Georgetown, January 2nd 1792:

My Dear Sir:

It was my intention to have been at Mr. Brent's by now, but hearing in Alexandria that Mr. Johnson<sup>74</sup> had arrived at Georgetown, and expecting that a meeting of the Commissioners would take place, I returned this morning to lay before them your demands for the operations of the winter. Before I left Alexandria, I enquired and found a man, willing to agree for as many wheelbarrows as you desire; as he is a person in whom I believe confidence may be placed, I shall use every endeavor to induce the Commissioners to

<sup>73</sup> Papers of the District, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>74</sup> Mr. Johnson was the third Commissioner appointed by Washington; owing to other engagements he had not been able to take part in the activities of the Board before 1792.

engage his services. Since your departure I have tried to enlist men accustomed to working in a quarry. In some measure I have succeeded, although yet deficient of the number you wish; however with all possible expedition the whole shall be employed. Mr. Burns has agreed with me to supply cord-wood for the commissary at seven shillings and six pence a cord including every expence of cutting and cord-ing etc. which is perhaps less than you expected. He has also promised me to supply logs sufficient to erect barracks upon the President's square, and near the market, at the same rate that the timber from Mr. Fendell's land is to be had; now I shall esteem it a favor if you will immediately inform me whether it may not be advisable to take a part of his wood, provided some expense can be saved and much inconvenience, as it stands more contiguous to the place for building the barracks . . . . .

The Commissioners will meet tomorrow; the result of which you shall be informed of shortly. At all events I shall take immediate steps to fix the given number of hands in the city and at the quarry; at the same time you may rest assured that no exertion, assiduity or attention shall be wanting to carry into effect your views as far as the temperature of the season will allow.

With the greatest respect, I have the honor to be, Dear Sir,  
Yours etc. I. Roberdeau.<sup>74a</sup>

The second letter of this series was written five days later from Aquia:

My Dear Sir;

I arrived here yesterday and visited both the quarries belonging to the public, the quality and situation of which I believe to be really good; in pursuance of your orders I have engaged as master-workman, Robert Miller at £6, 10s

<sup>74a</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

Virginia currency a month . . . . . He has promised me that he will faithfully adhere to the business, and make every exertion in his power to forward it with enterprize and vigor—Mr. Rhea will be here on Wednesday next with twenty-five men, a part of which number will be instantly employed in erecting barracks at both quarries . . . . With respect to provisions requisite for the support of the men to be employed, Messrs. Cabot and Brun have given directions . . . . . to their correspondent at Dumfries . . . . upon the same terms as the supplies in the city . . . . . of tools necessary for extracting stone I have a list . . . . Mr. Miller has promised to lend those in his possession which may be enough to employ the hands . . . until the barracks are built . . . .

In the city things are much in the same situation as when I last wrote you. . . . I hope when I return to Georgetown, which will be tomorrow, to meet a letter from you respecting the wood belonging to Burns, . . . . and the boats you wish built.

On my way to this place I met Dr. Stuart who insisted upon my immediate return to Georgetown; that the Commissioners were about to meet and that my presence was necessary; also that Mr. Johnson and himself were of opinion that *all the hands*, except a few to build barracks, must be discharged until the spring—I informed the gentlemen, that I had waited several days the proposed meeting, that I had received orders from you, which I had the evening before shown Mr. Carroll, and left a letter from you addressed to them, which would give all the necessary information in regard to the intended operations for the winter . . . . As regards discharging the hands I referred him to your letter for the number that should be employed through the winter. Now most willingly I would have returned to Georgetown had the Doctor not mentioned the intention to discharge the



men. A resolution of that kind I well knew it was impossible for me to prevent and being . . . determined on my part to adhere most strictly to your orders I came on to this place . . . . .

Another letter written next morning, Sunday the 8th January, from Dumfries, informed L'Enfant that the Commissary, Mr. Boraff, had arrived early that morning, after riding all night, to consult with Roberdeau regarding what could be done about an order he had received from the Commissioners "to discharge all the hands." He had also been informed that Roberdeau and himself would be held responsible and be "liable to prosecution should any of the tools be used until spring or their further orders." The two young men decided then and there that as Major L'Enfant was their master, him and him alone would they serve, and that they would run the risk of prosecution by refusing to obey the orders of the Commissioners. In the words of Roberdeau:

. . . . to follow implicitly your directions being my whole duty and my only aim I without hesitation gave my horse to Boraff and insisted upon his return to the city before morning that he might continue in service *all the hands* . . . . . I would not have this cause you any uneasiness or distrust, for you may be assured your orders will be attended to most punctually *until they are countermanded by yourself*. . . . It is my intention to take the stage to Georgetown where I shall be tomorrow afternoon . . . . I wish you to write me immediately on receipt of this . . . . whether you have any further orders to communicate. In the mean time and ever, I have the honor to be Dear Sir, Your etc. . . . .

I. Roberdeau.<sup>75</sup>

The order of the Commissioners had been given Saturday night. Boraff was back at his post Monday morning ready to continue the work as though nothing unusual had happened.

<sup>75</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

Roberdeau arrived at Georgetown the following afternoon; that same night he wrote Major L'Enfant: (January 9, 1792).

I found our concerns in a terrible state; the Commissioners had discharged the commissary, the overseers, and all the hands, and with the rest I received a written discharge. The agitation I was thrown into was inconceivably great—I rushed into the Commissioner's apartment and vindicated my conduct most strenuously . . . . unfortunately I was thrown off my guard and insulted them in a public and indecent manner. . . .

Roberdeau then related how he afterwards apologized to each one separately for not having treated them “with politeness as a gentleman.” He goes on:

I am to see them in the morning and expect to have their late resolution set aside . . . should they not assent I shall take the most prudent steps to keep in employ your number of men, *at all events* until I hear from you; the country already rings with the idea that all the hands are to be discharged. . . a single line from you would be most acceptable; but until that arrives your orders are fulfilled. I am with the greatest respect, my dear Sir, etc.<sup>76</sup>

Whether because of the irregularity of the mail service at that season or for some other reason, Roberdeau's letters failed to reach the Major in Philadelphia.<sup>77</sup> This was an advantage for it gave him uninterrupted leisure to work upon plans for the Public Buildings and to concentrate his mind on the preparation of a Report to the President in which he outlined the work to be done during the next five years, the number of men that would be required, together with the expense involved. In this Report, which is given below, L'Enfant apologized for appealing to the President, but ex-

<sup>76</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>77</sup> From the endorsement of Roberdeau's letters, L'Enfant was living at this time at 112 South Second Street.

cused himself on the ground that it was necessary for the success of the undertaking, that a superior authority should now intervene, "So as may insure harmony amongst the parties concerned." Without such intervention he expresses himself as feeling "a diffidence to venture further in the work."

The Report, probably dated the day it was handed to the President, is as follows:

Philadelphia, January 17, 1792.

Sir

the approaching season for renewing the work at the Federal city and the importance of progressing it so as to determine the balance of opinion on the undertaking, to that side to which it already favorably inclines, require, that exertion should be made to engage in it from the beginning in such a degree of vigor and activity, as will disappoint the hopes of those who wish ill to the business, and encourage the confidence of the well disposed, it becomes therefore necessary to call your attention on measures of most immediate moment to determine.

Knowing you wished never to be applied to on the subject of business intrusted to the management of the Commissioners, I would decline troubling you at this moment, when other affairs must engross your time; were it not that I considere the commencement of the work next season, will be but the beginning of the grand operations of the plan & conceive a permanent organization of sistem for continuing all future operations to be of absolute necessity and wish it may come from you in the first instance to prevent difficulties, which, (without such organization) will arise in the prosecution of the work, & must by interfering with the progress prove constant sources of new importunities to you.

wishing then that matters should be determined in such manner, as may insure harmony amongst the parties con-



cerned, and being convinced it would not be safe to rely wholly on the exertions of the managers of the business, I feel a diffidence from the actual state of things to venture further in the work, unless adequate provisions are made.

I adress to you the inclosed statement of work intended with a summary of the expences it will incur, from which you will easily conceive the motives of my inquietude particularly when you will observe . . . at an hour so near when the work must be renewed, & from the foregoing considerations it is of the greatest importance not to engage in it but with powerful means.

Everything yet remains to be done for establishing a regular mode of proceeding—no adequate means of supply provided—no materials engaged proportional to the work to be effected, no measures taken to procure the necessary number of men to employ, the neighborhood of the city offering no kind of resources at least none to be depended on.

Assistance wanted must therefore come from a distance, the season already far advanced, the demand for such hands as might be procured, will increase in proportion as the winter passing will afford them employment at home, materials will be dearer when an indispensable necessity for them is known, & provisions more difficult to obtain—no time then being to be lost and a necessity of seeking additional funds to those at disposal—these are the considerations which lead me to demand your particular attention to the enclosed statement of work and estimates of expences, and sollicite your concurrence to the expedient of a loan, which is offered from Holland—provided that one or more states or the Commissioners or any competent individuals or company, will be sponsors—this would at once secure a sufficient supply to engage with vigor, in the work intended for the year, & continue the plan of operations with security to the end of the year 1796.

from the first moment I engaged in the business of the city I have considered this as the only mode of supplying the demands for so great an undertaking which could give certainty to the plan

when (submitting my opinion to you on the subject) I endeavored to extend the limits of the city beyond what had first been contemplated thereby to enlarge the public property therein, my object was not to secure an adequate supply from a sale of lots, which I ever view and remain confident will prove insufficient—but to obtain greater means of facilitating a loan on mortgage of part of the property. lots may be mortgaged in such situations as will never interfere with the settlement of the city but rather determine it where most essential.

the difficulty now is how to bring the States of virginia or maryland (or either of them) into the measure and obviate the doubts of procuring other security to the satisfaction of the loaner of the gross sum required—other expedients may be devised such as is proposed in the estimates, to secure at least sufficient supply for the years operations—until a meeting of the assembly of those states shall afford the means of effecting the loan; if assurance can be given that such loan will take place, on such assurance money may be obtained in advance—it is scarcely to be feared that difficulties should arise on the part of the States as the progress of the work will then afford them a stronger security, I cannot even imagine those States would have rejected the proposition at their last session had some pains been taken to demonstrate the benefit which must result—at any rate I am fully persuaded much good would have resulted from the attempt———would not even a competition for the advantages which may be made to lenders have insured them a small benefit without disbursement or any momentary inconvenience to the treasury by opening this adventurous

spirit of the friends to the establishment and exciting associations to be formed on speculations tending to advance the object.

I must acknowledge that from the conviction of the propriety of adequate funds being established to secure a regular supply I rested satisfied that some exertions would have been made that way in the course of last season, your opinion having agreed with the foregoing idea—I hoped the commissionaires would have been active in devising some mode at least to effect a momentary loan, their inattention to this doubtless proceeded from a misconception of the magnitude of the objects to pursue or as I observed on a former occasion from a depreciation of the improvements being carried on the grand scale I propose—their ideas that the means afforded by a sale of lots would be more than adequate to the objects prevented them from considering that any expedient for procuring money on loan is preferable to a sale under the present inconveniency, considering the different interest which may lead to depreciate them, this being too evident to need any further observation I only add that the greater progress is made in improvement the more will be enhanced the value of the public property greatly beyond the sum expended—a longer time being given to diffuse proper knowledge of the undertaking in this and other countrys, much good will result from evincing to the world that the means of effecting the plan depend not on the mere uncertainty of temporary supply from the sale of lots.

An inexhaustible resource will be secured by postponing any large sales untill the value is so enhanced as to render them adequate to supply new demands & gradually disengage the mortgaged property This will not hinder the speculations of friendly individuals, or prevent purchases being made, an annual [annual] sale of few lots (however limited in number) taking place will fully answer the pur-



pose of speculators in the success of the establishment as in addition of public lots sold may be admitted some of the proprietors' lots, to increase the sale to such a number as the purchaser may desire.

This mode of proceeding by mutual sale would be doubly expedient and advantageous, by more effectually interesting the proprietors to raise the value of publick property thereby fixing a standart for the value of theirs, and by offering an opportunity of selling to advantage would induce those having large tracts to dispose of part of their property and enable them to improve such as they chose to reserve.

far from being injurious, a small sale of publick lots and the deareness of them will prove the most effectual means of defeating speculation unfriendly to the object, all sales at publick auction ought to be heigh as from this price estimations will be made of the remaining property, and a limited sale is the surest mode to raise the value by creating a competition, the object of a sale must not be so much to engage in the interest a greater number of individuals as to prompt and insure the settlements of those parts of the city which from the combination of the plan are best calculated to reflect a reciprocity & equality of advantages over the whole extent *therefore the propriety of determining a plan of sale should be first duly considered*

the best mode of engaging the interest of speculators to a speedy improvement will be a partial Sale specially binding the purchaser to improve in a limited time on part of his purchase—and as an inducement offering the lots on the following terms—viz—

on a stipulated number of lots purchased give one to be built upon in a certain time to be commenced in a time specified, for the price of the remainder let it be at the lowest price of the latest publick sale in the nearest place of such purchase, leaving any further advantages that may be re-

quired to be determined by the importance of the establishment.

in case of a foreign nation agreeing to build a hotel for their minister—it would be proper to determine the situation and extent by the magnitude of the plan of construction intended—since in consequence of some overtures I ventured to make to the ministers and residents here on that subject, the idea has been pleasing and some of them have already engaged to solicit the concurrence of their courts and I conceive that ground being given to them free would prove so advantageous to the enterprise that I cannot but wish you will soon determine on the mode most proper for enabling those gentlemen to apply officially to their respective courts, as an early acquiescence on their would most powerfully give confidence to foreigner desirous of purchasing and this together with a loan to be effected and proposed would most certainly decide a pursuit of those grand engagements I have exerted every means in my power to encourage—but none of which will be commenced by Foreigner or even american associations, unless *some shining progress is made in the grand work* which the publick has to effect—the continuance of that progress evidently provided for, and the whole machine put in such motion as *will convince the frinds as well as enemies to its success* that it will be accomplished in all parts proper to secure that superiority of advantage which the various local combinations & novelty of distribution is intended to procure to the new city over all other now existing—

full confident I am that you wish to see the whole business conducted with that economy which in great works consist more in a judicious employment of time & application of objects than in the little saving—where procuring a plentifulness of means may accelerate the motion & being not less sensible that your wish is not confined barely to provide

accommodations for the government but extends to effect the whole establishment in a manner that shall reflect same to the american Empire——Sir,

I shall close this letter recaling your attention to the enclosed papers requesting you will determine some permanent establishment for conducting the business & that you will direct the measures most expedient to insure a proper supply.

in contemplating this object it will be necessary to comprehend the magnitude of the work intended to reflect that it is not merely this or that object which are most necessary or ought to be undertaken first, but to considere that the objects intended have such relation with each other that they cannot be singly effected without great inconvenience and loss by a double handling of objects which a contraction of operation would make necessary. the reducing of a street being necessary to fill up other places worsing (*sic*) or walling here or there to contribute to the advancement of the next, & so on——

to organize a machine so complicated & to insure regular action in all the parts demand coolness and Resolution——& as the means provided are so wholly inadequate, it becomes more interesting to preserve those resources the public property will afford,——

I am

with respectful submission

your most humble &

most obedient servant

(Signed) P. C. L'Enfant.

The president of the United States.

(This is endorsed on the reverse)

Major L'Enfant

with an estimate of the

Labor & expences necessary



to be employed in the federal city.

17th Jany. 1792.

---

recd. by the Commrs. 14th March 1792 See Letter Book Vol. I, pp. 75—Secretary Jefferson to the Commrs. March 6, 1792. 3rd line from bottom.

Philadelphia, January 17, 1792.

OPERATIONS Intended for the ensuing season in the FEDERAL CITY to which is added an estimate of the expenditure of one year proces & number of hands necessary.

Number  
of men

1st.

To continue clearing the cellars & begin laying the foundation of the two principal buildings and bring these forward to such a stage as they will be safe from injury the next winter. the digers to continue afterward employed in shaping the adjacent grounds.

2nd

150

planting the wall of the terrace supporting each of these building & forming the gradual ascent to the Federal Square, iether of these must be rised in the mean time as the foundation of the building with which they are connected.

3rd

300

wharfing the bank of the potomac to form the end of the canal and from thence to dig & [ ] the canal up to the Federal Square. to effect this in proper season three hundred men will be required four months. the men to be afterwards employed at the other end of that canal on the Eastern branche.

	No. of teams	4th	
30	10	to Reduce the two streets on the side of the president park & garden to a proper gradation, the excavation of which will be wanted to fill up the warfing & bank of the canal, two objects which must be carried in concert, for this object 10 teams will be wanted and 30 labourer.	
		5th	
200	10	to reduce some of the principal streets in such parts as may difuse the advantage thro the various property and bring them to the state of good turnpike Roads. two hundred men and 10 teams will be wanted.	
		6th	
50		to build three good stone bridges one over rock creek and two over the canal that over Rock creek being immediately necessary to engage in to effect a communication with the post Road & for establishing a necessary intercourse will employ fifty men. Filling up the abutment & adjoining warfs will be effected by reducing the post Road. a warf next to that bridge one near the end of the canal on the potomac & another on the East branch at the nearest communication with the Federal and president Squares must be established for landing materials & for an equal encouragement of improvements in those parts. streets leading to these must be reduced & will serve to the warfing.	
		7th	
		Aqueducts already begun must be continued in various places to convey the water to	

60 such places and in such quantity as will be of general use to the city, an object to be done so early as to be compleated before any material improvement are begun for which sixty men will be required.

8th

25 15 the transporting of material from the three entry places to various parts where they are to be used will employ 15 strong teams and 10 labourers.

9th

35 the quantity of brick wanted in the first instance will employ twenty five men and as many labourers with two teams & drivers but considering the quantity of bricks that will be necessary in prosecuting the building an increasing number of brickmakers will be wanted  
52 2 after the first year.

10th

two mills must be erected to grind and pound plaster of paris cement and clay, Four horses and six men must attend these mills—

11th

16 2 a water mill for sawing various kind of plank will be of great advantage if possible to be obtained in the vicinity, but a number of sawers—ten—must be employed for this purpose.

12th

tow large scow of a particular construction for the purpose of transporting stone, of large dimensions and two other for smaller stones must be constantly employed and will require twenty boatmen.



50

13th

the exploring the stone and assisting to load the boats will require thirty labourers

14th

30

twenty stone cutters will be indispensible to work the stone for the building ten labourers must attend them—and the increasing demand for this wrought stone will require additional number of hands the succeeding years.

15th

80

as soon as the materials are collected in sufficient quantity round the buildings, which will not be before the 4th July, the twenty massons must be increased to 40 with the addition of 60 labourers. that number to be increased in proportion to the progress of the building.

---

 1043

16th

the various kinds of iron which must be readily supplied require that tow shops be erected with tow (*sic*) fires for a master and 4 smiths with proper tools & stock

5

17 overseers

2 wagon men

3 commissarys

---

 1070 men

17th

a wheelwright shop must also be established to accomodate a proper number of hands—this and the carpenters are included in the return of number at the canal—for which there will be immediate and constant employment. proper sades (*sic*) for mixing & tempering mortar storing lime &c being immediately wanted at each place where building is intended.

there will also [be] wanted shades for brickmakers & to protect the bricks from injury of weather shops also will be necessary for carpenter, & stone cutters employed in particular work & for other various purposes which must be speedily erected & will require a vast quantity of scantling plank & boards. a yard of which must be established to supply the constant demand for those articles.

The quantity of lumber that will be wanted is not possible to be stated at this early stage of the business but the magnitude of the objects that will employ that article & the immediate occasion there will be for it, in primary operations, require that contract should be formed to procure an immediate supply of any quantity as can be obtained—

to purchase so much of the wood as remain now standing within the limits of the city on the best terms the proprietors will agree to part with is very necessary—for though very little of that wood is proper for construction yet most of the straight tress will answer various purposes & being properly explored—firewood for burning brick, for cooking & other purposes will be secured, with every facility of preserving shades here & there were useful or ornamental. Should the proprietors be willing to part with the whole it would be economie to purchase it—as it must be noticed that unless this is done, in all parts where work is carried on there will be constant occasion for logs-probs-levers &c.—and as often as this happens the impossibility of restraining from cutting down the nearest trees answerable to immediate object will give occasion for captious proprietors to complain without possibility of giving them redress.

the experience of a few months in a work so extensive which will become more and more complicated too powerfully evincing an impossibility of effecting it in struggling thro such difficulties as will constantly disappoint the best purposes while perseverance in the pursuit disregarding the

little vexations of unjudicious will expose the undertaken—

it is necessary to place under the authority of one single director all those employed in the execution, to leave him the appointment or removal of them as he being answerable for the propriety of execution must be judge of their capacity and is the only one to whom they can with any propriety be subordinate—the exercise of any prepondering authority being in this respect to be restrained by the consideration that the good of the object to accomplish is only to be procured by trusting to the attention of one head who having a constant pursuit and the connection of those objects with the whole of the plan to effect.

(Signed) P. C. L'Enfant

Estimate of the expence for men provisions & materials  
necessary for conducting the Operations in the  
federal city for the year 1792

	36 Carpenters & 4	Foremen		
	36 Mason	4	pr. mo.	
	23 Brickmakers	2	13 @ 24	3744
	18 Stone cutters	2		
	4 Smiths	1		
<hr/>				
130	117 Mechanics — — —	@ 12	16848	20592
	10 teams of 4 oxen each	@ 30	14040	
	29 “ of 3 horses			
	39 drivers at 10 Dolls.			
	2 Masters at	20	5160	19200
<hr/>				
	10 pit sawers — — —	10	1200	
91	19 boatmen at 8 dolls			
	1 Master at	15	2004	
	17 Overseers of the La-			
	bourers at	20	4080	



849	1 Commissary at 30			
	2 assistants at	20	840	8124
			<hr/>	
	Labourers	7		71316
				<hr/>
	Total of work — — —			119232
	Subsistence for 1070 men @ 45			
	dolls. yr.		48150	
	forage for 39 teams @ 30			
	dolls. mo.		14040	
			<hr/>	
	Materials Total of Subsistence			62190
	30,000 perch rough stone part contracted. 60 c	18000		
	6000 pine logs for canal & warves @ 3 dolls.	18000		
	2000 hhds. Lime each 10 bushel @ 5 dolls.	10000	46000	
			<hr/>	
	purchase of wood for various purposes	3000		
	boards, scantlings &c.	10000		
	for bellows anvils vices tools for Smiths and Iron steel grindstones nails spikes etc	1000		
	cranes Gins screws capsins takles blocks cordage tools & instruments to be used at the quarries and at the bridge wharfs	1200		
	2 buildings—for the quarry rent 10 yrs.	66½		

for the quarry purchased of Mr. Brent	6000	
for cabins and houses erecting & to be erected	1000	
		<hr/>
		9266 $\frac{2}{3}$ 69266 $\frac{2}{3}$
Amount brout over		250688 $\frac{2}{3}$
for transporting the workmen oxen horses from the place they are engaged	2000	
for 1 years provision for 50 families of mechanics at 50 Dolls	2500	
to which families lots are to be given on conditions of building in certain time furniture and utensils of cook- ing for people	1000	
provision for further supply of tools & impliments	2000	
provision for do. materials	5000	12500
		<hr/>
General provision for con- tingencies		36811 $\frac{1}{3}$
		<hr/>
		Dolls 300000

In the above estimates no provision is made for the compensation, & subsistance of the following persons who ought to be placed on a permanent and fixed establishment—viz

- 1 Director General
- 2 assistant directors or Intendants, 1 Draftsman—
- 1 Surveyor of the City—1 assistant surveyor
- 1 head carpenter—1 head mason

(See note on the last page)

as these two last must be men of eminence in their profession & the persons contemplated are in full employment in a large City a sufficient inducement must be presented them—The Commissioners being appointed in virtue of a law of Congress no reference is made to any provision for their compensation or immediate Officers, and the permanent lines being on the same principle that expense may also with propriety be charged to the United States—

Amount of funds established for erecting the Federal City	
a Grant of Virginia	130000
a Grant of Maryland	70000
	<hr/>
	200,000
To this fund a Loan must be sought for	1,000,000
	<hr/>
	1,200,000

this provision will be sufficient for 4 years Operations and the effect of this expenditure will enhance the Value of Lots to such degree that a more considerable Sale may commence for paying the interest and providing for future expence securing a sufficiency for commencing instalments to redeem the principal—No account is made of any proceeds of Sales prior to that period as the claims of individuals for their land taken for publick use will much exceed any probable amo- of such Sales—

The preceeding Estimate of men provisions & Material is calculated from the nearest statement that can be made from the magnitude of the various important objects to engage in & pursue with activity and equal degree of dispatch and the price is founde on the best data I could obtain—this statement cannot properly be reduced consistent with the importance of the work as it may here be noted that there is a necessity as well as an advantage in commencing each of the



Objects at once—however as method and Sistem are absolutely necessary to be established in every branch of Employment—considering that the whole number of men wanted cannot be collected so soon as desired, in addition a wish to diminish as possible the necessary demand for other funds than those obtained—these considerations have induced to confine the requisitions for the present year to the smallest possible numbers as in the followg. Estimates leaving the increase of Numbers to be regulated by the Stae of funds as no inconveniency will result from increasing gradually a smaller to a greater number—

Reduced Estimate—

27 Carpenters including				
	3	foremen		
18 Masons	2			
18 Stone cutters	2			
23 Bricklayers	2			
4 Smiths	1			
90 Mechanicks	@	12	12960	15840
20 Boatmen including 1 Master a 8-& 15			2004	
20 Team Drivers a 10 & 1 Master		20	2640	
1 Commissary @ 30 2 deputies		20 each	840	
7 Overseers of the Labourers at		20	1680	
				<hr/>
				7164
360 Labourers	@	7		30240
				<hr/>
				53244
10 teams Oxen 4 each 20 teams @ 30			7200	
10 teams horse 3 each				
forage & provinder for 20 teams @ 30			7200	
Subsistence for 511 men @ 121 <sup>m</sup>				
per year 4433			22549	
				<hr/>
				29749
				<hr/>
				36949

NB

This is calculated from beef at 7 Dolls

Pork at 12- flour at 4- corn at  $2\frac{1}{2}$ 

Spirit at 50c agalln and proportd by the  
 followg allowance 1<sup>lb</sup> beef or pork 1<sup>lb</sup> flour  $\frac{1}{2}$ <sup>lb</sup> corn  
 meal  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint spirit per day & 2 os. each chocolate  
 sugar butter 4 oz Soap 1<sup>lb</sup> Rice per week——

## Materials

24000 perch Tough Stone for bridges & wharves		
	@ 60c	14400
2000 pine Logs for canals & wharves 3 Dolls		6000
1000 hhds Lime 10 bushels each 5		5000
Wood for various purposes		2000
for boards plank scantlings		4000
for 3 large Boats for transporting stone with sail mastd		600
for Bellows anvils &c tools for Smiths Iron & steel Nails spikes Grindstones irons for carts &c.		810
Cranes Gins screnes blocks tackles cordage &c.		300
the purchase of Brent's Quarry		6000
the other quarry rented for 10 years		67
the Cabins erecting		400
		<hr/> 39577
for transporting the men and teams from the place they are obtained		1000
for furniture & utensils of cooking for people		500
for provisions for 20 Mechanicks families 1 yr. @ 50		1000
to which families lots may be given on condi- tion of building		
for additional team drivers & forage		6660
		<hr/> 9160

for contingencies that no Obstruction or delay may be occasioned in Operations	21070
--	-------

---

Dolls 160,000

No provision for the principal Conductors of the Operations is included in the above——  
 (Signed) P. C. L.

Amount of Resources which may be applyd to this Requisition

2 first payments of Lots		
sold last Octr. abo.	4000	
2 first installments of		
Virga grant due		
Jan. 7, 93	65000	
2 first installments of		
Maryld do	35000	
expences paid last year to be deducted		104,000
	(say)	19,000
provision for the Requisition	85,000	
remains unprovided	75,000	160,000
1793 Requisition for		
1000 Men &c.	255325	75,000
at 5% one years interest		
of the 75000	3750	259,073
provided by 3rd payment Grants & Sale	52,000	
Ballance unprovided		207,073
		282,073



1794 yearly requisition	255382	
1 yrs intrest	282073	14103.65
		269,426.65
provided by last paymt. of grants &c	52,000	217,426.65
		<hr/>
Unprovided		499,499.65
1795 Yearly Requisition	255,323	499,499.65
1 years int.	499,499.65	24,975
	<hr/>	280,298.35
		<hr/>
Amt. unprovided		779,797.63
1796 Yearly Requisition	255,323	
1 yrs int.	779,797.63	38,989.88
		294,312.88
		<hr/>

Total funds to be provided for continuing the Operations to the close of the year 1796 1,074,110.51

after which sales of Lots may be made on larger scale sufficient for the future Requisitions and to admit of an annual deduction to repay the Loan—in the interim a Sale to be made yearly by publick auction not to exceed 100 Lots a year in different parts of the City to be appropriated for the payment of the ground taken from several proprietors for the publick use (and beyond that number the proprietors might be admitted to increase the Sales from their property if their should be demand for greater sales)——liberty being given for private Sales to any purchaser who will be under Bonds to build in a given time and manner, to whom advantageous terms may be offered.

To obtain the Loan required, to any State which will become Sponsors for the Loan let 3 fourths of the publick lots be mortgaged in such parts of the city as shall not check the sales in those parts more necessary to be speedily settled.

A Loan of a million dollars may be obtained for 20 years at 5% per Cent to be reimbursed by 10 installments after 5 years provided notice of such intentions be given 6 months previous and not less than 100,000 dolls. reimbursed at one time—but as this loan must be made in gross it is necessary to know what may be done with the money to save the interest of such parts as will not be immediately commanded from time to time when the Object shall require it. one Object presents which is the funded paper of the United States this property can at any time be sold and [if] there is a probability of considerable use of that property it may perhaps afford some profit so as to reduce the interest—another and perhaps a better expedient would be to place the money with the Secretary of the Treasury for publick use at the same rate as the loan is obtained, to be drawn from that department in certain sums at stated periods—this perhaps may be a mutual convenience, and it will establish the provisions for the city from the risque of a possible depreciation of paper—

by this arrangement the interest of the City will be best secured and the States of Virginia and Maryland to which the loan will be—should provide each for the payment of 25,000 Dolls. annually for the interest of the loan, and if no other means of indemnification can be found a cession of Lots must be made to them—this being most disadvantageous to the City it is even better to pay the interest out of the Capital but as the interest will gradually diminish after the first ten years perhaps after 6 years the sponsors may have the appropriation of one quarter the proceeds of all publock Sales the remaining 3 quarters being appropriated to reduce the Capital and for continuing the work the sales to be proportionally augmented. It is to be remarked that the expenditure of only one half the loan required will give such a decided establishment to the City that the appropriations

will be ample security for sums to a much greater extent than what is now required.—after the government shall take possession of the City it will become interested to provide a sufficient supply for disengaging the publick property and forwarding the compleat accomplishment of all important Objects which may be in good train——

No prospect of settlement from the publick sales therfrom results the propriety of limiting them and the last sale is a proof there being no prospect of any building but the intention of two handsome squares frusted [entire line illegible] an important diagonal subverted from that improvement which would have been a great aid to the City, this is the result of the first attempt at publick sale——

Should difficulties arise of effecting the proposed loan previous to the next meeting of the Assembly of Virginia and Maryland and reduce the expectation to a state of uncertainty till that period (which it is to be hoped will not be the case even if a cession of some later lots or other reasonable compensation is made to a state-company or contractor for negotiating the business) stil a loan might be effected for the deficient sum of next years estimate, by pledging the residue of the grents of the two states ; or by some operation with the bank of the United States and this anticipation would be better than to suffer a confinement of operations the approaching season as on the activity of the process then (by giving a [good?] impression) will depend in great measure the [MS. torn] the establishment. it is of importance to progress the work with decided vigor, to give confidence to those who are disposed to adventure in purchase, to prompt the well disposed to exert their means in improvement & defeat the hopes of the ill intentioned in evincing, that the means of effecting the undertaking depend not merely on the uncertainty of suply from a temporary sale of property and it is to be observed that a prodigal disposal



of the property at an early stage of the business would undoubtedly work a disipation of the means very detrimental to the attachment of the Grand Object.—

(Signed) P. C. L'Enfant.

note to page

Among principal assistants to the Director general as in the statement for a permanent establishment, a city Surveyor is required and will be very necessary exclusive of the Geographer General of the United States who, in the present progress of the city with all the principal points established, after the boundary lines are run will find it no object to him—since all the business except this being relative to the execution of the plan must make a part of the operations immediately subordinate to a director general—

the advantage of securing a man intimate with the location and the wish I have of testifying the obligation I feel for the frindly assistance given me by Mr. Ellicott presenting me in his brother Mr. benjamin Ellicott a person to whom I am equally indebted and whose personal capacity I know to be fully adequate to the accomplishment, I cannot but wish a suitable proposition may be made for his inducement in that capacity——

(Signed) P. C. L.<sup>78</sup>

On the 16th January L'Enfant wrote Roberdeau giving him directions about taking the “level of Congress Hill,” little realizing that the letter would find his young friend detained in prison on a “writ of trespass.” This letter was not received by Roberdeau until January 26th. The reply

<sup>78</sup> No. 73. (P. B. & G.), Philadelphia, Jan. 17, 1792.

L'Enfant, P. C.

Calling the President's attention to various matters, and inclosing estimates of labor and expenses. (Hitherto unpublished).

The above L'Enfant report was secured through the courtesy of Lieut. Col. U. S. Grant 3d, Director Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital.

dated January 27th,<sup>79</sup> informed L'Enfant of what had taken place during his absence. "My letters" wrote Roberdeau . . . . "which have gone out with nearly every stage . . . must have miscarried or you would not be ignorant of the lengths to which the Commissioners have proceeded against me." Mastering his indignation L'Enfant sent the President an impassioned plea for his young friend. The letter, dated February 6, 1792, ends with the following paragraph:

. . . The critical situation to which matters are now brought, testifying a disinclination in the Commissioners to facilitate the prosecution of the business in such manner as to enable me to engage anew in it—with much regret do I foresee the *various difficulties* which must impede the way to *a new organization of the whole system*. . . . . feeling myself doubly interested in the success from regard to reputation, and an ardent desire fully to answer your expectations, the confidence which from the beginning of the business you have placed in me enjoins me to *renounce the pursuit unless the power of effecting the work with advantage to the public, and credit to myself is left me* (Italics inserted).

I have the honor to be etc.<sup>80</sup>

In the action of the Commissioners L'Enfant could not fail to read his own doom. Unless the President's heart could be touched, the vast organization outlined in the January Report would remain unrealized. L'Enfant did not know that on January 17th Washington had written the Commissioners in reply to theirs of the 9th:

I . . . . am sensible of the expediency of the act of authority you have found it necessary to exercise over all persons employed in the public works under your care, and fully approve of what you did.

It has appeared I think, that nothing less could draw their attention to a single source of authority, and confine

<sup>79</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>80</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

their operations to specified objects. It is certainly wise to take a view of the work to be done, the funds for carrying it on, and to employ the best instruments. Major L'Enfant might be an useful one if he could be brought to reduce himself within those limits which your own responsibility obliges you to prescribe to him. Perhaps when Mr. Johnson shall arrive here, he may be able to let him see that nothing will be required but what is perfectly reconcilable to reason & to a due degree of liberty on his part.— . . . .<sup>81</sup>

It is plain from the letter just quoted that a kindly feeling for L'Enfant still lingered in Washington's heart. He still wished to see a certain degree of liberty of action accorded the Major. A day later however these feelings had completely changed, for in the meantime enemies had been at work.

Washington wrote Jefferson January 18th:

Dear Sir;

The conduct of Major L'Enfant and those employed under him astonishes me beyond measure:—and something more than even appears, must be meant by them:—When you are at leisure I should be glad to have a further conversation with you on this subject.

Yours sincerely and affectionately  
(Signed) Ge. Washington<sup>82</sup>

A few days later the Secretary of State wrote to Daniel Carroll:

. . . . Be pleased to consider this letter as from one private individual to another. The conduct of the agents who ought to be subordinate is properly viewed here . . . In the mean time the President apprehends that accident or malice may throw down the stakes by which the lots are marked on

<sup>81</sup> RECORDS, Vol. 17, p. 45.

<sup>82</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).



the ground and thus a whole summer's work be lost. He thinks the attention of one person might be savingly employed in a daily visit to these stakes; and fastening such as may be getting loose or replacing those which may be withdrawn. I have thought it not improper to suggest this to you and am with great esteem,

Dear Sir—

[Copy unsigned]<sup>83</sup>

Jefferson soon found that his suspicions had been anticipated. On the 27th Daniel Carroll replied that the Commissioners had “employed a careful person with instructions to pay attention in a very particular manner to the posts and marks in the Federal city” and he assured Jefferson that some one would make “daily visits to see that the stakes were kept in their proper position.” Thus it seems that both the Commissioners and the Secretary of State were so far from understanding the character of L’Enfant as to suppose him capable of criminal retaliation. In this trying situation personal resentment was soon added to suspicion. Daniel Carroll wrote January 18, 1792, to James Madison:

. . . . . I found on coming to town a most infamous slander handed about in small circles for some time, & had bursted forth that George Brent had information given him of the extent of the Commissioners orders for the purchase of his quarries, and it was understood . . . thro me—I have already traced this matter some way, and shall take such measures as may be proper. I can with truth say that I was never on any occasion more satisfied with my conduct than on this—indeed I have been scrupulously nice. This to you I know is equal to an oath. Satisfaction in my own mind is my first wish—it is agreeable however to have it in my power to confound, and I hope to punish the slanderer.

Yours, Dr. Sr. Affv.

Danl. Carroll.

<sup>83</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

P. S. My character is dear to me; use this above information respecting myself as may appear to you to be proper.<sup>84</sup>

The 26th he wrote again, evidently in reply to some comforting message from Madison:

. . . . I can truly say your favors have always given me pleasure, sometimes great relief when received under the nervous apprehension you know me subject to—a testimony of remembrance from those esteemed at all times must be grateful, at this, when black calumny has been busy must be peculiarly so . . . . .<sup>85</sup>

“ The slanderer ” whom the Commissioner hoped to punish was of course supposed to be L’Enfant. About this time Mr. Robert Brent, brother-in-law to the Commissioner, wrote his brother Daniel, at that time in Philadelphia, in part as follows:

. . . . It appears from certificates which have been procured that reports in some measure, about the quarries, came from Major L’Enfant which from the good opinion I have of him I do not believe. I would be glad you would ask him from me if he ever said in Mr. Davidson’s compting room, at Sutlers, or in any other place, that on offering my brother £1500 for his quarries, he, our brother, replied it was unnecessary for him to offer less than £1800 the price which I am authorized to ask from a letter in my pocket. Be particular in asking him, and in getting his answer; if you could get it in writing it would be best . . . .”<sup>86</sup>

L’Enfant’s categorical denial of this implied accusation, as well as his written reply to Mr. Robert Brent are preserved in the L’Enfant Papers and also in the Papers of the

<sup>84</sup> Letters to Madison, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>85</sup> Letters to Madison, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>86</sup> L’Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

District. There is no need to go deeper into this affair except to say that there was no further attempt to find ground of action against L'Enfant. The incident would have no interest today were it not that L'Enfant's facility in exonerating himself from this as from other charges only tended to deepen the prejudice against him, while the effect upon the President of all that the Commissioners wrote, and of all that was said to him by those upon whose advice he depended, made a reconciliation between him and the Major impossible.

Among the Washington Papers is an unpublished letter from Dr. Stuart of eight closely written foolscap pages in which the Commissioners' grievances against the Major are given in detail. Some of Dr. Stuart's phrases are interesting. He speaks of "serious and infamous slanders" having been circulated against them (the Commissioners). He says that "Messrs. Walker and Davidson had espoused the side of L'Enfant is not giving up the plan during the sales . . ." He calls the talk about the quarries "malicious calumny"; and says that L'Enfant and Roberdeau had said, or so friends of his had reported a reliable witness to have said, "that we were *ignorant and unfit*." "The spirit of party," Dr. Stuart elsewhere observes, "has been so prevalent that it is not surprising that a man of L'Enfant's turn should give implicit credit to every idle suggestion," and he assures the President that the Commissioners at their last meeting with one voice had determined "to give up their enviable offices rather than to be any longer subject to his [L'Enfant's] . . . caprice." He expresses a hope that the Major can be made happy under other Commissioners, or by being made independent of themselves. In this latter case he greatly fears, so he says, that "the treasury of the Union will not be adequate to the expenses incurred." There are also charges against "the loose and extravagant manner in which the work has been carried on," and a note of despair about the open spaces provided for in the "Plan." "I beg leave to suggest," he says, "that the intended appropriation of ground about the President's house . . . [is] much too extensive . . . . It may suit the genius of a despotic government to cultivate an immense and gloomy wilderness in



the midst of a thriving city . . . . I cannot think it suitable in our situation."<sup>87</sup>

L'Enfant's letter to Washington of February 6th (see *supra*, p. 133) must be the one indicated in the following note of February 7th to Jefferson. Washington says:

The enclosed came to my hand yesterday evening—I have heard nothing more of Mr. Johnson. I wish the business to which these letters relate was brought to an issue—an agreeable one is not, I perceive, to be expected.<sup>88</sup>

Two days later, he again wrote to his Secretary of State:

The President requests that Mr. J. would give the enclosed letters and papers a reading between this and dinner—and come an hour before it that he may have an opportunity of conversing with him on the subject of them.

Mr. Walker of Georgetown is in the city—from him if Mr. J[efferson] could contrive to get him to his house, he might learn the sentiments of the people of that place, Carrollsburg etc. With respect to the disputes between the Commissioners and Majr. L'Enfant—& generally of the state of the business—

Thursday morning.<sup>89</sup>

February 11th, another note to Mr. Jefferson says:

Dear Sir;

If you and Mr. Madison could make it convenient to take a family dinner with me today—or if engagement prevent this—wd. come at any hour in the afternoon most convenient

<sup>87</sup> Dr. Stuart was looked upon as Washington's personal representative on the Commission, as the Doctor was private physician to the President and family and was married to the widow of John Park Custis, son of Mrs. Washington. The grandchildren were divided between the Washington and Stuart households. His opinions therefore bore great weight with the President.

<sup>88</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>89</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

to yourselves we would converse fully, and try and fix on some plan for carrying the affairs of the Federal city into execution.

Under present appearances it is difficult, but it is nevertheless necessary to resolve on something—

Sincerely and affectionately

G. W.

Saturday, 11 Feb.<sup>90</sup>

Washington's next letter to Jefferson bore date of February 15th. He says:

Dear Sir;

Before I give any decided opinion upon the letter you have written to Majr. L'Enfant or on the alterations proposed for the engraved plan, I wish to converse with you on several matters which relate to this business. This may be, if nothing on your part renders it inconvenient, immediately after 8 o'clock tomorrow—at which hour I breakfast, and at which, if agreeable to you, I should like to see you. . . .

You will recollect the communication of Mr. Walker on Saturday afternoon;—from these—those of Sunday differed but little—But as he said Major L'Enfant had declined committing or suffering to be committed to writing any ideas of his, forasmuch as he had given them to me before in a letter, I have looked these over and send the only one I can find in which he has attempted to draw a line of demarcation between the Commissioners and himself.

Yours sincerely etc

G. W.<sup>91</sup>

No reply having been sent the Major either to his January Report or to his letters, he could only wait for some decisive word that would indicate the course which he should pursue.

<sup>90</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>91</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

From this state of passivity he was suddenly roused by the consciousness that an engraving of the " Plan " was being prepared without his oversight. He wrote to the Secretary of the President, Tobias Lear, February 17th, as follows:

My dear Sir;

Philadelphia, February 17, 1792

Apprehending there may be some misconstruction of my late conduct and views, as they respect a delay which has happened in the execution of a map of the city upon a scale suited to engraving . . . I take the liberty to address to you my ideas upon that subject which at a convenient season I request you will communicate to the President. . . . I do this with more cheerfulness as it is the last letter I propose to write interfering in matters relative to the city until some system, or arrangement is formed by the President whereby with certainty I may know in what manner in future the business is to be conducted.

To obtain this map to which I allude as correct as possible, I had some time previous to my leaving Georgetown requested Mr. Benjamin Ellicott should delineate on paper all the work that had been done in the city, which being accurately measured and permanently laid down on the ground, I intended to make the basis of the drawing of the remainder from the original plan, and upon a reduced scale for engraving—this was accordingly done; but though I will not say it was intentionally withheld from me, not having had it in my possession prevented me, immediately on my arrival here [having] the reduced drawing begun according to my intention & my Promise to the President. These circumstances and the difficulty of meeting immediately with a good draughtsman and an engineer . . . determined finally to request the assistance of Mr. Benjamin Ellicott who, though not professional in drawing, I conceived to be the most proper person to prepare the work in that part <sup>92</sup> more

<sup>92</sup> In pencil by L'Enfant: "the draft was stolen from him by the Commissioners themselves."



especially which himself and Mr. Roberdeau had with accuracy laid down upon the ground—the more to facilitate this I gave him the sketch which you had taken from the former undertaker of the plate, begging him to finish as much as he could in pencil only, without the assistance of the large map—which I had at that time in use, and by which we together would correct and compleat the whole.

I daily attended the progress of the business in all its stages, until Mr. Andrew Ellicott gave me to understand that he was ordered by Mr. Jefferson to attend himself to that business, and in consequence of which he had agreed already with an engraver.

This determined me to concern myself no more about it being confident that the meaning of Mr. Jefferson's order to Mr. Ellicott could not be to publish the plan without my knowledge or concurrence, and convinced that it would not be completely finished without recourse to the large map in my possession.<sup>93</sup> I conceived it would be proper to wait until I was called upon by him to review and correct the whole.

In a letter of L'Enfant without date, printed in RECORDS, Vol. 2, p. 125, he says regarding these events: "... I merely mention the fact of the plunder of my papers, etc. to make manifest the difficulty of proving how considerable were the quantity of detail plans of the great project and how the correspondance on the subject was also lost.

At that time too the particular plan and copper plates by me prepared for engraving in the month of August '91, . . . . had been lodged in the hands of the President. . . But although thus protected a number of my drawings' copies had been made therefrom without my knowledge, such as were seen in both houses of Congress hanging on the walls in December '91. Others were sent to Europe, viz. to Portugal and even to Petersburg in Russia. The Commissioners by means of an agent at Phila. in a surreptitious way procured the aforesaid plan prepared for engraving . . . and having effected the engraving prevailed on the President himself to cause the publication whereby having obtained the number of copies they wanted and becoming ultimately possessed of the copper plate they deemed themselves disengaged from the obligation of paying me the value of 10,000 copies which they had before requested of me . . . ."

<sup>93</sup>In pencil by L'Enfant: "but by the material stolen they got all that they wanted."

In this manner passed some days, in the mean time having had an application from Mr. Young the publisher of the monthly magazine for a plan of the city upon a reduced scale to place in the next number which indeed I had given him reason to expect, I directed him to apply to Mr. Andrew Ellicott, who, upon the application refused his assistance, Mr. Young informing me that his engraver would soon be engaged for Mr. Ellicott on the plate for the city, induced me to go to his house and see how far the draft was advanced—This draft to my great surprise I found in the state in which it now is, most unmercifully spoiled and altered from the original plan to a degree indeed evidently tending to disgrace me and ridicule the very undertaking<sup>94</sup>—inclined as I am to persuade myself this could not be the intention, and strange as it may appear that a gentleman, to whom in every instance I have conducted myself with the greatest candor and in whom I have confided as a friend, should harbor a design so inconsistent as to endeavor to destroy the reputation of one whose contempt for the little machinations of envy has left unguarded against the treachery of false friends.—was it necessary, it would not be here out of place to relate circumstances which in various periods when Mr. Ellicott engaged in the execution of the plan, led me to fear ill consequences might arise from an apparent desire to suggest ideas of his own and gradually to deviate from the original plan would tend to destroy that harmony and combination of the different parts<sup>95</sup> with the whole, to effect which has been the chief object of my labor and concern.—Whether this inclination to originate, or improve my plan can be attributed to inattention, to the difficulty to be en-

<sup>94</sup> In pencil by L'Enfant: "All the lineaments of the ground from which the whole direction of avenues can alone be perceived having been suppressed.

<sup>95</sup> In pencil by L'Enfant: "Evidence the ill-judged stand now of the Capital and presidential [illegible]

countered in endeavouring to correct errors<sup>96</sup> which such innovations would necessarily create, or whether drawn by the allurements of party, certain it is that he has been induced to hazard opinions, and to engage himself more forward to effect objects, which besides the impossibility to accomplish, he ought the less to have done.

Not willing to reflect upon the conduct of Mr. Ellicott nor of any other individual farther than a simple relation of facts, . . . in vindication of my real motives which are none other than those arising from an anxious concern for the interest of the establishment, I shall close this by requesting you for a moment to think of the consequences which must result from offering to the publick an erroneous map—laying aside those delicate feelings so difficult for me to express in points where reputation and honor are most evidently concerned—to all this I should be more indifferent did I not with regret foresee gratification to two or three individuals that would result from so imprudent a measure . . . who desire no better foundation for contention and clamour than the publick appearance of a plan deviating in any degree from that by which the operations in the city have been governed. I have the honor to be,

Your obedt. servant,

P. C. L'Enfant<sup>97</sup>

P. S. I this day sent to Mr. Andrew Ellicott for the plan together with other drafts necessary for me to redress the errors which notwithstanding his proceedings I was inclined to do to accelerate the engraving—But his having declined sending me that draft set it out of my power still to effect the object to my wishes and determine me immediately to address to you the foregoing.

<sup>96</sup> In pencil by L'Enfant: "the manner of correcting the plan [ ? ] on the Post Road"

<sup>97</sup> The original is published in the L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (RECORDS, Vol. 2, pp. 144-147). Notes by L'Enfant published for the first time.



Mr. Lear evidently communicated L'Enfant's letter to the President. On the 22nd the latter wrote Jefferson:

. . . . . The plan I think ought to appear as the work of L'Enfant. The one prepared for engraving not doing so is, I presume, one cause of his dissatisfaction. If he consents to act upon the conditions proposed and can point out any radical defects to amend which will be a gratification to him not improper in themselves, or productive of unnecessary or too much delay, had he not better be gratified in the alterations? This yourself and Mr. Walker can think of. The plans of the buildings ought to come forward immediately for consideration. I think Mr. Walker said yesterday he (L'Enfant) had been showing the different views of them to Mr. Trumbal.

Yours sincerely,

G. W.<sup>98</sup>

Wednesday, 7 o'clock

The same day Jefferson sent L'Enfant the following letter which was approved by the President:

Philadelphia, Feb. 22, 1792.

Sir;

The advance of the season begins to require that the plans for the buildings and other public works at the Federal city, should be in readiness, & the persons engaged who are to carry them into execution, the circumstances which have lately happened have produced an uncertainty whether you may be disposed to continue your services there.<sup>99</sup> I am charged by the President to say that your continuance would be desirable to him; & at the same time to *add that* (under-

<sup>98</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>99</sup> There is a penciled cross after the first sentence of this letter and a note on the left hand margin in L'Enfant's handwriting, today scarcely legible, which says: "The letter to the President of January 17th will show I was not behind in measures to determine a speedy renewal of the work."

lined by L'Enfant) the law requires that it should be in subordination to the Commissioners. They will of course receive your propositions, decide on the plans to be pursued from time to time, & submit them to the President to be approved or disapproved, & when returned with his approbation, the Commissioners will put into your hands the execution of such parts as shall be arranged with you, & will doubtless see from time to time that these objects, & no others, are pursued. It is not pretended to *stipulate* here the mode in which they shall carry on the execution. They alone can do that, & their discretion, good sense & zeal are a sufficient security that those whom they employ will have as little cause to be dissatisfied with the manner as with the matter of their orders. To this, it would be injustice to them not to add, as a motive the more in this particular instance, the desire they have ever manifested to conform to the judgment and wishes of the President. The same disposition will ensure an oblivion of whatever disagreeable may have arisen heretofore; on a perfect understanding being established as to the relation to subsist in the future between themselves and those they employ, in the conduct of the works. I must beg the favor of your answer whether you will continue your services on the footing expressed in this letter; and am with esteem, Sir,

Your most obedt. humble servt.

(Signed) Thos. Jefferson.

Major L'Enfant <sup>100</sup>

L'Enfant replied as follows to this letter:

Philadelphia, February 26, 1792.

Sir;

I received your favor of the 22nd instant; the sentiments therein expressed I have attentively considered, nor can I

<sup>100</sup> Published in RECORDS, Vol. 2, p. 148, but without L'Enfant's penciled note.

discover any idea calculated to accomodate those dissensions which so unfortunately have invaded the interests of the Federal city. I am well aware that the season for preparing for the operations of the ensuing summer, if any are intended, has far advanced. Indeed the time in which I conceived they ought to have been in readiness, past. You well know my wishes for arrangements tended in great measure to that object, consequently fault cannot be mine, as my every exertion to accomplish it was impeded by the Commissioners; The circumstances attending these inconveniences (*sic*) have afforded me much anxiety, solicitous as I have always been for the interest of that city; at the same time I acknowledge that I am not a little surprised to find that a doubt has arisen in the mind of your self or the President of the uncertainty of my wishes to continue my services there; the motives by which I have been actuated during the time I have been engaged in it; the continual exertions I have made in its promotion, the arrangement for this purpose which I lately handed to the President, indeed every step I have taken, cannot but evince most strongly how solicitously concerned I am in the success of it, and with what regret I should relinquish it—

My desire to conform to the judgment and wishes of the President have really been ardent, and I trust my actions always have manifested those desires most uncontrovertably; nor am I conscious in a single instance to have had any other motive than an implicit conformity to his will. Under this impression at the most early period of the work, no attention nor politeness as a gentleman has been wanting in me to attain the confidence and secure the friendship of the Commissioners—I coveted it, I sincerely wished it, knowing that without a perfect good understanding between them and myself, whatever exertions I should make, would prove fruitless; and embracing in my mind the immensity



of the business to be undertaken, evinced to me the necessity that I should be disengaged from every concern, and be devoted wholly to forming and carrying into execution a plan in which I promised myself every support from them, trusting they felt a similar interest in the prosperity and success of the undertaking, and that therefore they would freely have relied upon me in all matters relating to my professional character, and requested from me all the information and assistance in my power to aid them in the performance of their share of the business, which in men so little versed in the minutiae of such operations would have been judicious and might in propriety have been done, without descending from that pride of office which, I am mortified to be obliged to say it, has been their chief object . . . and has afforded me much concern, knowing that the President had always entertained a different opinion of their dispositions, and delicately situated as I was, put it out of my power to assure him that his expectations of these gentlemen adhering to their protestations to him . . . were erroneous; as on the contrary, though apparently acknowledging themselves obliged to me for affording necessary information, on receiving it have uniformly acted in opposition thereto . . . . and appear rather to have endeavored to obtain that knowledge from me the more effectually to defeat my intentions . . . . . The inquietude I feel must continue to the end to impede the business, which will oblige me to renounce the pursuit of that fame, which the success of the undertaking must procure, rather than to engage to conduct it under a system which would . . . . not only crush its growth but make me appear the principal cause of the destruction of it.

. . . . . seeing there is much stress laid upon the propriety of thir conduct and the motives by which . . . . [it] is inspired lays me under the necessity, in justification of my own feelings, to enumerate some instances that occurred

in the course of the work, in which in my opinion, they have been rather deficient, and such as the President himself will recollect—In the first instance then, you must remember what difficulties were encountered to obtain ground proportional to the plan then under consideration of the President, and how greatly these difficulties were augmented by the non-concurrence of the Commissioners in any steps I had taken to that effect.—Also the unwearied efforts made by them to cause some alterations in the plan since approved by him, all which evinces in them a greater concern to favor individual interests, than attention to secure the public good.—This disposition has been particularly manifested in the business of the Boundary line . . . . before the President himself had determined . . . . [its] extent . . . . directing Mr. Ellicott to proceed according to their own ideas. The consequence of this . . . . was a general opposition to deed the land granted the public, every individual justly conceiving they had as much right to partiality as Mr. Notley Young, whose interest it seemed to be the sole object of the Commissioners thereby to benefit. The difference with Mr. Stoddert originated from this source alone, by leaving out of that line his spring, which it was intended to exclude and which became a forcible argument to that gentleman to obtain his wish—to the evident disfiguration of the plan. Afterwards . . . . when I actually prevailed upon Mr. Robert Peters . . . to . . . wharf that part of the harbor belonging to him on terms advantageous to the public; this idea the Commissioners rejected . . . . conceiving that this improvement would be injurious to the Carrollsburg interest, which in fact it would have . . . . promoted . . . . The object of the canal . . . . they prevented from being begun . . . disregarding the benefit . . . . to the city in an easy transportation to the various parts . . . . under the influence . . . [of] the Georgetown opposition . . . . as injurious to the rapid development of that place . . . . .

Constantly mislead by the allurements of parties . . . with a temperament little addicted to business . . . involving themselves in contention and disputes . . . [they] have created dissensions with the principles concerned in the execution and encouraged mutiny among the people.

Admitting however their confined ideas . . . to be a kind of apology for the injudicious manner in which the business . . . has been conducted, . . . yet . . . how wonderfully deficient they have been in the prosecution . . . of contracts of supplies of provisions etc. . . . their inattention to a regular and economical method to obtain necessary supplies and the uncertain mode of procuring money . . . are facts so evident as to need no comment.

The only purchase of any magnitude was that of the stone quarry. For full information of the manner in which this business was conducted I refer you to the enclosed letter that I wrote to Mr. Brent upon particular application from his brother, a copy of which has been forwarded by me to Georgetown. (See *supra*, p. 136) . . . . .

It is also necessary to enter upon the subject . . . of those proceedings for which every dispassionate, impartial observer must . . . condemn them—the imprisonment of Mr. Roberdeau acting under my orders and without even a suspicion of their design, was highly injurious and rash seeing . . . I shall be obliged publically to expose these transactions in my own justification, to their dishonor and to the evident disadvantage of the public cause. . . . .

I rest satisfied that the President will consider . . . that erecting houses for the accommodation of Government, is not the only object, nay, not so important an one, as the encouragement to prepare buildings at those principal points, on the speedy settlement of which depends the rapid increase of the city . . . while the prosperity of the undertaking depends upon that spirit of enterprise by which all improve-



ments must be made and that prudent manner by which the sale of lots and all establishments both public and private shall be conducted.

. . . . . nor must it be expected that anything short of what I propose will answer that purpose . . . . to change a wilderness into a city, to erect and beautify buildings etc. to that degree of perfection necessary to receive the seat of Government of a vast empire the short period of time that remains to effect these objects is an undertaking vast as it is novel—and reflecting that all this is to be done under the many disadvantages of opposing interests . . . the only expedient is to conciliate and interest the minds of all ranks of people . . . by holding out forcible inducements . . . .

I hope it will be . . . too well evidenced that all my opposition to them (the Commissioners) and the determination I have taken no longer to act in subjection to their will and caprice, is influenced by the purest principles and warmest good wishes to the full attainment of the main object. . . .

If therefore the law absolutely requires without any equivocation that my continuance shall depend upon an appointment from the Commissioners—I cannot nor would I upon any consideration submit myself to it . . . .

I have the honor to be—etc. etc.

Thomas Jefferson, Esq.<sup>101</sup>

The above letter was sent to Jefferson Saturday the 26th, 1792. After reading it he sent it to the President who the same afternoon wrote Jefferson as follows:

Sir;

I have perused the enclosed answer to your letter to Major L'Enfant. Both are returned. A final decision thereupon must be had. I wish it to be taken upon the best ground, and

<sup>101</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. Copy in handwriting of Roberdeau. (Hitherto unpublished).

with the best advice.—Send it I pray you to Mr. Madison who is better acquainted with the whole of this matter than any other.—I wish also that the attorney-general may see and become acquainted with the circumstances (I can think of no other at this moment to call in) and wish that all th[ree] of you would be with me at half past eight o'clock tomorrow—if convenient at a later hour to be named, that I may be at home and disengaged.

Yours sincerely,

4 o'clock

G. W.

Feb. 26th 1792.<sup>102</sup>

That night the President sent his private secretary, Tobias Lear, in a final endeavor to remove L'Enfant's "unfounded suspicions," as he said, regarding the Commissioners. This was the "straw too much" for the overwrought Major. Forgetting for the moment the august personage represented by the friend before him, he waved aside the suggestion with the disdainful remark "that he had already heard enough of this matter." This remark as reported to Washington offended him deeply. When the small group invited by the President came together next morning to discuss the matter so as to arrive at the "best" decision, they found Washington's mind already made up. The impatience so manifest in Jefferson's note may be considered therefore as the reflection of the President's own attitude. He wrote L'Enfant:

Philadelphia, Feb. 27, 1792.

Sir;

From your letter received yesterday in answer to my last, and your declarations in conversation with Mr. Lear, it is understood you absolutely decline acting under the authority of the present Commissioners, if this understanding of your meaning be right, I am instructed by the President to inform you that notwithstanding the desire he has enter-

<sup>102</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

tained to preserve your agency in the business, the condition upon which it is to be done is inadmissible & your services must be at an end.

I have the honor to be Sir,

Your most obedt. humble sevt.

(Signed) Th. Jefferson <sup>103</sup>

Immediately on receiving the above, L'Enfant wrote as follows to the President:

Philadelphia, February 27, 1792.

Sir;

Having in my last letter to Mr. Jefferson so fully explained the Reasons which urge me to decline all concern in the Federal city under the present system; as these reasons were the result of serious, impartial consideration upon so important a subject, I wish it understood that it is still my resolution—By the letter of Mr. Jefferson to me in answer, I perceive, that all my services are at an end—Seeing things are so—let me now earnestly request you to believe that it is with the regret the most sincere I see the termination of all pursuits in which so lately I was engaged, and that my every view throughout was incited by the warmest wishes for the advancement of your favorite object, and that all my abilities were united to insure its success.

From a full conviction of the impossibility to effect the intended establishment, while struggling through the various difficulties that continually must occur, and which would as certainly prove insurmountable, to late to remedy their ill-consequences; at the same time fearing that by my continuance, you might indulge a fallacious hope of success, by which in the end you must have been deceived, under these impressions do I renounce all concern in it.

Permit me also to assure in the most faithful manner that the same Reasons which have driven me from the establish-

<sup>103</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C.; RECORDS, Vol. 2, p. 150.



ment, will prevent any man of capacity, impressed with the same disinterested views, by which in every stage of it, I have been actuated, and who may be sufficiently well convinced of the importance of the undertaking, from engaging in a work that must defeat his sanguin hopes and baffle every exertions—Should this business fall into the hands of one devoid of these impressions, and of course insensible to the real benefit of the public, how great soever his power may be, self-interest immediately becomes his only view, and deception and dishonor are the issue.—

As I am now totally disengaged, and

[End wanting]<sup>104</sup>

Among the Jefferson Papers there is a note of February 28, 1792, relative to the L'Enfant affair in Washington's hand writing which shows that uncertainty had again taken possession of the President's mind. He asks:

Would it be advisable to let L'Enfant alter the plan if he will do it in a certain given time—and provided also we retain the means, if anything unfair is intended, that we may not suff [edge of the paper].

Ought anything to be said in my letter to him respecting payment for his past services.—

Should Mr. Ellicott be again asked in strong and explicit terms if the plan exhibited by him is conformable to the actual state of things on the ground and agreeable to the design of Majr. L'Enfant.—

Also whether he will undertake and execute with all possible despatch the laying off of the lots agreeable to the plan under the authority and orders of the Commissioners.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>104</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. Unsigned draft in L'Enfant's handwriting. Published in D. A. R. Magazine for March 1929. It is interesting to note that the diction of the above letter is clear, rapid and sustained throughout, while there are only a few lapses in orthography; this is in striking contrast to many of his writings.

<sup>105</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

The same day Washington sent the following letter to L'Enfant.<sup>106</sup>

Philadelphia, February 28, 1792.

Sir;

Your final resolution being taken, I shall delay no longer to give my ideas to the Commissioners for carrying into effect the Plan of the Federal City. The continuance of your services (as I have often assured you) would have been pleasing to me could they have been retained on terms compatible with the law. Every mode has been tried to accommodate your wishes on this principle except changing the Commissioners (for Commissioners there *must* be, and under their direction the public business *must* be carried on, or *the law will be violated*; this is the opinion of the Attorney general of the United States and other competent judges). To change the Commissioners *cannot be done* on grounds of propriety, justice or policy.—

Many weeks have been lost since you came to Philadelphia in obtaining a plan for engraving notwithstanding the earnestness with which I requested it might be prepared on your first arrival. Further delay in this business is inadmissible.<sup>107</sup>

In a like manner five months have elapsed and been lost by the compliment which was intended to be paid you, in de-

<sup>106</sup> This is the only communication from Washington to L'Enfant not written with his own hand. At the bottom of the first page L'Enfant has noted in pencil, "The President could not have written this with his own hand. I question if he read it before signing his name."

<sup>107</sup> Another pencilled note in L'Enfant's hand reads, "See letter to Mr. Lear of Feb. 17."

At the end of the letter L'Enfant has written some lines that for the most part are too faint to be legible; one remark however comes out clearly: "... the reproof is all the more singular in that the Commissioners had since the month of January—arrested the survey I wanted for completion of the plan,—which [illegible]"

This letter is in the L'Enfant Papers, L. C. Published from the Letter Book copy, L. C. in RECORDS, Vol. 17. The penciled notes have not before been published.

pending *alone* upon your plans for the public buildings instead of advertising a premium to the person who should present the best (which would equally have included yourself). These are unpleasant things to the friends of the measure, and are very much regretted.

I know not what kind of a certificate to give that will subserve the purpose of Mr. Roberdeau. My conversation with and letters to you, have uniformly conveyed the idea that the Commissioners stood between you and the President of the United States;—*that it lay with them to draw the line of demarcation between themselves and you* (Italics inserted); and that it was from them alone that you were to receive your direction.—A recurrence to my letters of the 2nd and 13th of December will clearly show you the light in which I have considered the subject.

With sincere wishes for your happiness and prosperity,

I am Sir,

Your most obedt. sert.

(Signed) G<sup>o</sup>/ Washington.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>108</sup> The original draft of this letter has also been preserved. It is in Washington's handwriting and contains two barred but not illegible paragraphs, of which the first given below follows immediately the first paragraph of the letter sent. It reads:

"Nor do I believe it would avail anything if they were.—The same cause will produce like effects, and it is feared you would [consent] to be under the control of no one."

The original draft ends thus:

"Was there any alternative after the explicit declaration contained in these letters but to have proceeded agreeably to the line there drawn? or to have renounced all further connection with the plan? Matters being placed on this footing would it not have comported with propriety and have been but a very moderate accommodation on your part, before you had left Georgetown to have made a communication of your intentions and settled some plan for the winter operations, with the Commissioners? a quorum of these gentlemen were meeting almost every week at that place and a full board was summoned to attend the 4th or 5th of January, but a few days after you left it. How easy then was it to have obviated the difficulties under which Mr. Roberdeau has labored, and how much smoother and better things would have gone on! Had you been on the spot and could not,



Mr. George Walker, the Proprietor then in Philadelphia who had several times been called in consultation while the above matter was pending, received the following letter from Jefferson:

Philadelphia, March 1, 1792.

Sir

I was sorry that, being from home at the time you were so good as to call upon me I missed seeing you. The president being engaged also, was equally unlucky. As you left no letter for me I took for granted that your negotiations with Mjr Lenfant had proved fruitless. After your departure the President sent Mr. Lear to Majr. Lenfant to see what could be made of him. He declared unequivocally that he would act on no condition but the dismissal of the Commissioners or his being made independent of them.—the latter being impossible under the law and the former too arrogant to be answered he was notified that his services were at an end. I think you have seen enough of his temper to satisfy yourself that he never could have acted under any control, not even that of the President himself: and on the whole I am persuaded the enterprise will advance more surely under a more temperate direction; under one that shall proceed as fast and no faster than it can pay. Measures will be taken to procure plans for the public buildings, in which business five months have been lost in a dependance on Majr. Lenfant, who has made no preparations of that kind. I wish yourself

---

or would not have satisfied the Commissioners with respect to the utility of continuing, at daily wages, at so inclement a season, there is no question but that the order for their dismissal would have been handed to you—As you were not there, had made no communication of your plan—and they conceived from the inclemency of the season that an expense inadequate to the advantages was incurring, they were reduced to the alternative of submitting to what they conceived to be an evil—or issuing their orders to Mr. Roberdeau to desist. The consequences of not doing it now to be decided.”—(Papers of the District, L. C., (Hitherto unpublished.)

and the inhabitants of Georgetown to be assured that every exertion will be made to advance and secure this enterprise.

I have the honor to be etc.

(Signed) Th. Jefferson <sup>109</sup>

The same day Jefferson wrote Daniel Carroll in part as follows:

Dear Sir;

Much time has been spent in endeavoring to reduce Majr. Lenfant to continue in the business he was engaged in, in proper subordination to the Commissioners. He has entirely refused so that he has been notified that we consider his services at an end. . . . .

On the 6th Washington wrote the Commissioners:

. . . . . Matters are at length brought to a close with Maj. L'Enfant. As I had a strong desire to retain his services in this business, provided it could be done upon a proper footing, I gave him every opportunity of coming forward and stating the mode in which he would wish to be employed, always however, assuring him, that he must be under the control of the Commissioners.<sup>110</sup>

At the same time Jefferson wrote them as follows:

Gentlemen;

It having been found impracticable to employ Majr Lenfant about the federal city, in that degree of subordination which was lawful and proper, he has been notified that his services are at an end. It is now proper that he should receive the reward of his past services, and the wish that he should have no just cause of discontent suggests that it should be liberal. The President thinks of 2500 or 3000 dol-

<sup>109</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished.)

<sup>110</sup> RECORDS, Vol. 17, p. 47.

lars, but leaves the determination to you. . . . . the enemies of this enterprise will take advantage of this retirement of Lenfant to trumpet an abortion of the whole. this will require double exertions to be counteracted. I enclose you the project of a loan which is agreed on if you approve it. Your answer will be immediately expected and it is kept entirely secret, till the subscriptions are actually opened. With this money in aid of your other funds the work may be pushed with such vigor as to convince the world that it will not be relaxed.

Mr. Roberdeau's conduct has been really blamable, yet we suppose the principle object of the arrest was to remove him off the ground, as the prosecution of him to judgment might give room to misrepresentation of the motives, perhaps you may think it not amiss to discontinue the proceedings—you will receive herewith a packet of papers among which are several projects and estimates which have been given in by different persons, and which are handed on to you, not as by any means carrying with them any degree of approbation, but merely that if you find anything good in them, you may convert it to some account. *Some of these contain the views of Lenfant* (Italics inserted). See *Supra*, p. 110. This seems to be the only notice that was ever taken of the Report of January 17.<sup>110\*</sup>

Two days later the President wrote Dr. Stuart a long and intimate letter which he said "is to be considered as a private letter in answer to yours of the 20th ulto. but it may under that idea be communicated to your associates in office." He wrote:

Every advantage will be taken of the Major's dereliction. A vigorous contradiction therefore is essential.—If he does not come forth openly to declare it—his friends and the enemies to the measure will do it for him—that he found mat-

<sup>110\*</sup> Published in the Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Memorial Edition, Vol. VIII, p. 307.



ters were likely to be conducted on so pimpering a scale that he would not hazard his character or reputation on the event, under the control he was to be placed ”<sup>111</sup> . . . .

It would have been very agreeable to me that you should have shown the copies of letters I had written to Major L’Enfant declaratory to the subordinate part he was destined to act under the Commissioners. It does not appear to have been so understood by the Proprietors, from the sentiments expressed to Mr. Walker. . . . .

Two other remarks of Washington in this letter are noteworthy. In response to Dr. Stuart’s comment about the “ Plan,” complaining that the President’s square was likely to be “ an immense and gloomy wilderness ” (see *supra*, p. 137), Washington took the cheerful view that it was none too large.

“ It is easier at all times,” he says, “ to retrench than to enlarge a square, and a deviation in the plan in this instance would open the door to the other applications, which might perplex, embarrass and delay business exceedingly; and end more than probably in violent discontent.”

There is this further paragraph regarding L’Enfant:

The plan of the City having met universal applause (as far as my information goes) and Major L’Enfant having become a very discontented man—it was thought that, less than from 2,500 to 3,000 dollars would not be proper to offer him for his services; instead of this, suppose five hundred guineas, and a Lot in a good part of the City be substituted? I think it would be more pleasing and less expensive.

. . . . .<sup>112</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Here again Washington’s fears regarding L’Enfant were unfounded. So sincere was the latter’s reverence for the President that he remained silent for eight years. Not until after the death of Washington did L’Enfant attempt to bring his case before the public; “ I suffered and submitted to all,” he wrote in 1801, “ out of respect for him . . . . although the seasons of trial . . . . committed me to more than the human frame and mind would be capable of long sustaining.” His first Memorial to Congress was dated August 30, 1800.

<sup>112</sup> See RECORDS, vol. 17, p. 52.

Except for the penciled notes written on the margin of the last letter from Washington, L'Enfant made no response to the President's communication. It was the distress of his faithful friend Roberdeau, still detained in prison, that roused him to make the following appeal:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN;

Philadelphia, 10 March, 1792.

This is to certify that Mr. I. Roberdeau had positive direction from me to act in conformity to the written orders I gave him on the 25th December last, enjoining to him verbally not to deviate therefrom. . . . Apprehending some difficulties might imper [hamper] the operations I proposed, . . . I positively enjoined M. Roberdeau in case provision or money should be wanting—to procure either on his or my own credit. . . .

I also certify that the foregoing verbal direction, as well as my written instruction to Mr. Roberdeau had been given in full confidence of so having a right to do—by consequence of the prerogative left me to order & direct all persons belonging to the execution of the plan of the city, *which had been well agreed and understood between the President of the United States—his Commissioners & myself* & after discussion on the propriety of so giving me *exclusive right*, as took place on a particular occasion; that from this and from the manner how the business had been since conducted, there could no longer exist a doubt my having exercised a right which belonged to me and in contrariety of which the Commissioners proceeding against Mr. Roberdeau taking advantage of my absence, cannot be viewed otherwise than as an intent to provoke a direct opposition to themselves which they most (*sic*) have expected especially as I had by letter given them notice of my order to that gentleman, informing them I had left him to oversee the hand & to direct all the work in my absence, requesting from them at the

same time every necessary supply—all which placed Mr. Roberdeau on a proper ground to act as he has done in obedience to orders and most evident the impropriety of the charge against him.

P. C. L'Enfant.<sup>113</sup>

In the mean time L'Enfant's pen had not been idle. He had deeply meditated the announcement of his withdrawal from the business of the Federal City which he wished to make to the Proprietors, and had written them at great length. An abbreviation follows:

Philadelphia, March 10th 1792.

Gentlemen;

The personal interest you certainly feel at every occurrence that may involve the welfare of the Federal establishment, must I conceive awaken in you apprehensions relative to the circumstances forcing me now to resign all concern in the business; a desire to satisfy you of the motives by which I have been actuated, enduces me to address you on the subject.—

The zeal with which I have endeavored to prompt the attainment of the national object, from my first engaging in the undertaking—the attention I have constantly given in

<sup>113</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished.)

The Commissioners seem to have dismissed the case for on the 14th they wrote Andrew Ellicott that they had no objection to Roberdeau being employed again in the affairs of the city. "Considering him," they said, "a misguided young man, we have felt more compassion than resentment towards him." See: Papers of the District, Vol. 1, March 14, 1792; see also Jefferson's letter of March 6th to the Commissioners (*supra*, p. 158).

Evidently Ellicott informed Roberdeau, for in a subsequent letter to L'Enfant, he says: "I thank you . . . for your congratulations upon my *brevet* appointment from the great folks . . . the honor done me is doubtless great—I am sensible of the[ir] . . . forgiving me as a misguided young man, but I am fearful that I should not behave as well in future, therefore as there may be a *possibility* to exist independent of such honors, I decline, and *you my friend may be assured* that nothing shall induce me to accept terms dishonorable to you or myself." (March 23, 1792) L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished.)



securing every possible advantage to the public, & impartiality to insure a proportional benefit to each of you individually, . . . . . must have sufficiently evinced . . . . how I united the whole of my ability . . . in endeavors to secure the public good . . . . . You well know how numerous have been the obstacles opposing my good purposes—in the first place from contentions among yourselves . . . . determined me to proceed regardless of clamor and cavils which I trusted would subside. . . . after a progress in the work should testify, that my every step was impartially directed, in such manner too, as in the end to enrich you. Happy in . . . seeing your growing confidence . . . . enjoined on me to press forward; braving down all opposition, in contempt of those petty allurements of jealousy . . . . aiming at that fame which a complete accomplishment of the undertaking could deserve.

In my exertions to that end . . . . I was convinced of the necessity to exhibit . . . the greatness of the design—to manifest the intended operations, so that by engaging the national honor in the success, it might gain friends in those states whose individual political interests must long continue to render them inimical—

I had the mortification to be much hindered from a want of support and concurrence of the Commissioners, on whom the primary management of the business devolved by law—I wondered not at their confined ideas of the nature of an undertaking so wholly novel . . . . I should only have expected they would have rested with confidence upon me . . . . . So long as the vexation I received at their hand was limited to myself . . . induced me to conceal the mortification and the more increased my exertions . . Neither did I complain of the additional weight of labor . . . . glorying on the contrary at the opportunity to testify my zeal for the business, and from the indulgence with which the President

of the United States himself viewed my exertion, and *his adoption of the plan he had directed me to effect* and his approval of *all the schemes I suggested* (italics inserted) . . . I wished to merit the confidence he has placed in me, and it is this desire . . . which resolves me this moment to renounce all concern in the business, being so well convinced that under the present system of management it is impracticable to effect that establishment in any manner answerable to its object.

. . . . . having to change a wilderness into a city and in so short a time . . . capable to enduce an effectual removal of the government of a vast empire . . . . in a country devoid of internal resources . . . . distant from materials and necessaries . . . must appear . . . an impossibility to effectuate, particularly without any provision of funds from the united Government the means must be forced from the territory . . . which has yet but an ideal value . . . . . embracing in my mind the whole immensity of the business . . . you must easily conceive that I could not but feel the deepest concern at the opposition I met . . . . .

What they could expect from this . . . interference . . . is not easy to determine . . . . having no kind of idea of the business . . . so varied in operation and so complicated . . . resting for information and assistance upon the mercenary attendance of a mechanical conductor . . . . self interest must be the principal end of these men; they will, I doubt not, count the prejudice of the commissioners, and bind to their caprice—but I doubt whether flattering the passions of men on whom they are dependent will not lead more . . . . to lengthening the operation rather than to shorten the business . . . which must unavoidably disappoint the political end of the undertaking . . . .

The foregoing observations, [it must] be allowed by every thinking man unprejudiced, ar the result of sound reasoning

and accurate comparison of the great mass of power and of interest crowding into the Eastern states and which must outweigh the jarring concerns which may center about the Potomac. . . . Wishing to caution you . . . from a too great dependence upon . . . success in the attainment of your wishes . . . . and conceiving that your property may not rise with that rapidity which has been your expectations, even . . . should the operations which I propose . . . be carried on . . . [thereby] giving real value to joint property of individuals and the public . . . yet I must here testify to you my apprehensions, from the high rate of your demands to purchasers, as well as from a reluctance in some of you to part on any . . . [terms] with your property; both these circumstances will most probably disappoint your purpose by preventing many from taking a chance with you in the improvement of it.

By these observations often made to you heretofore, my intention is not to depreciate your property nor to advise you to part with it at the low price that may suit the convenience of petty speculators; it is well known to you that I always had another view, and the many great efforts I have made to delay, and to limit the sale of public lots has sufficiently shown that my wish was first to have raised their value proportionately to the demand to supply the work; this is necessary to answer the public object but is not so well adapted to the circumstances of your individual property—Your interest is to moderate your prices, according to the situation, and in proportion to the advantages to be derived from the improvements the purchaser may engage to make thereon. . . . [Let me] repeat to you, that all sales, never so high, without such conditions must prove in the end a loss; while parting with some of your property under current price or even giving it in part under special conditions [as



to] improvements . . . .<sup>114</sup> will enrich you in proportion as it will ensure the prosperity of the business.

If you consider, especially at this juncture . . . under the intended management . . . . that the [results] must fall short of . . . . what is necessary to induce an immigration of wealthy speculators and raise the spirit of venture, you will conceive that the exertions and sacrifices to which I advise you become indispensable. The improbability that a plan so novel and the work required to execute so little understood, will be conducted . . . [so] as to promote all the ends for which it was designed, [makes me apprehensive] from precedents already evincing partial direction . . . there will be [made] alterations in the plan to suit the fancy or gratify the spleen of a few men . . . [but] firmness in opposing this and harmony among yourselves . . . will prevent the most unhappy consequences to your reciprocal interests connected in the complete achievement of the original plan.

<sup>114</sup> By a curious coincidence, two days before L'Enfant penned these words, Daniel Carroll (the Commissioner) had written James Madison: "The exorbitant and unreasonable expectations of Daniel Carroll of Duddington at one end of the city and Robert Peters at the other, may check in a degree the public good & do prejudice to themselves . . . his (D. C. of D.) inordinate and blind passion may cramp us." See *Letters to Madison*, L. C. for March 8, '92. (Unpublished.)

Too late some of the proprietors awoke to this truth. It is recorded that many years later Daniel Carroll of Duddington himself offered to give lots away in certain sections of the city if people would come and build on them. Some idea of the tragic situation in which the proprietors later found themselves can be obtained from a letter of the same Mr. Carroll who wrote to Robert Brent under date of July 24, 1837 (quoted in Tindall, p. 81) where he says: "... I . . . perfectly remember that the general opinion was that so great was the gift that the citizens never would be subject to taxation for the improvements of the streets having relinquished every alternate lot to the Government.). Indeed, some were so wild as to suppose . . . that the Government might pave the streets with ingots of gold or silver. After nearly half a century the result is now fully known; the unfortunate proprietors are generally brought to ruin, and some with scarcely enough to buy daily food for their families. The subject is now so truly frightful to me that I hate to think of it, much less to write of it.

. . . . I cannot disguise to you that much has already been attempted by the contrivance of an erroneous map of the city about to be published, which partly copied from the original has afterwards been mangled and altered in a shameful manner in its most essential parts. . . .

Thus step by step [through] ignorance or malice, the injury aimed at the plan will affect you, as in the suppression of any of the transverse avenues changing their direction or connection with other streets, both which I combined to advance the interest of the most remote situations . . . will leave the remaining part of the plan . . . at the discretion of those employed, without any one . . . to direct who sufficiently understands the plan and feels his reputation concerned in the accurate accomplishment of it.

. . . . .

Having so fully entered into every particular . . . and the motives of my every transaction, and an explanation of facts, an open disclosure of which I was induced to make from sincere good wish for your individual welfare, and from an inclination to enable you to regulate your exertions as may best tend to correct the inconveniencies [so as to effect] . . . the success of the Federal City, in which while I renounce further concern, I cannot help feeling an interest, hoping that the sentiments by which I have been actuated will secure me that share of merit with you and the public, which the endeavors I have made to promote its true interest may merit.

I shall here take my leave of you with every assurance of regret at the circumstances which forced me to withdraw . . . The unfavorable issue which I apprehend from the mistaken management . . . would have induced me . . . to reconcile myself to the disagreeableness and mortification to be encountered in the pursuit, and I would doubtless have readily conformed to the wish the President has testified for my continuance in the business, were I not . . . satisfied

that under these circumstances . . . . dishonor must await the end . . . and a willingness at the same time not to delude you nor the friends of the business with a false hope . . . which you might indulge from a confidence in my exertions to redress the blunders of others, under the present arrangement oblige me to resign all concern in it.<sup>115</sup>

This letter was accompanied with the following short note to one of the proprietors, Mr. Robert Peters:

Philadelphia, March 10, 1792

My Dear Sir;

Permit me here to enclose to you a letter addressed to the Proprietors of territory within the Federal City which I request you will be kind enough to lay before them, the circumstances which oblige me to abandon the business not diminishing the concern I feel for the public good.

My request to you I rest upon the frindship with which you have honored me and wishing you that success which I am denied from procuring you

I beg you to believe me

My dear Sir, with high sentitments of esteem,

Your m. ob. sev.

Mr. Robert peter (*sic*)<sup>116</sup>

Mr. Walker having returned to Georgetown early in March wrote the Secretary of State:

Georgetown March 9th 1792

Sir

Your favour of the first instant I had the honour to receive and was certainly sorry that I missed seeing you the evening before I left Philad' although I then had been able to obtain no reply from Major L'Enfant to the letter I had

<sup>115</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished.) The above is a copy in the handwriting of Roberdeau.

<sup>116</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished.) Draft in L'Enfant's hand.



the honour to hand him from you: therefore did not think it necessary to write.

This dismissal of Major L'Enfant has given great alarm to the Proprietors, and all those interested in the City of Washington; although I have fully explained to them, the difficulties the President had to surmount in treating with him

I this day received the enclosed letter, which they wish should be laid before the President when convenient.—I am sorry to discover such a want of confidence in the ability of the Commissioners, and am afraid the affairs of the City will come into public investigation if means cannot be adopted by which Major L'Enfant may be yet continued.

I have the honour to be with reverence and respect

Sir Your mo. obt. St.—

George Walker <sup>117</sup>

The petition sent Mr. Walker to be laid before the President, is as follows:

Georgetown March 9, 1792.

Sir,

We are obliged by your communication of the letter from the Secretary of State. We cannot but lament extremely that the misunderstanding between the Commissioners and Major L'Enfant has ended in the dismissal of the latter—for having from our own knowledge of his conduct, formed the highest opinion of his talents, his unwearied Zeal, his firmness (tho sometimes perhaps improperly exerted, in general highly useful), his impartiality to this or that end of the city, or to the views of those proprietors with whom he has been in friendship or otherwise, and his total disregard of all pecuniary considerations, we greatly doubt whether a Siceession (*sic*) can be found in this country, or indeed in any country Qualified to be so eminently useful to the Ob-

<sup>117</sup> Papers of the District, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished.)

ject to which we are all so much interested—and Certainly none can be found possessing in a higher degree the public confidence; a Circumstance, which we cannot help thinking of very great importance in a business where so much depends on public opinion.—

Thus thinking, we anxiously hope, that some mode will yet be devised by the friends of this place at Philadelphia, to secure to the City the benefit of Major L'Enfant's future services. The commrs. we presume, would do anything they could do, Consistently with their duty, to accomodate to his views, and however he may have been led away by the warmth of his temper we are persuaded, from his well known attachment to the Object, which has employed so much of his time and study, that he will on cooler reflection, and on knowing the high confidence placed in him by the bulk of the proprietors, stand less on punctilio than he has hitherto done, (especially if he could have assurance that in things really in his province, and in which from his scientific knowledge and approved taste, he would be most competent to decide) he would be left without control.

Memo [by the Proprietor]—The last paragraph was omitted in the copy kept of this letter, and is now taken from memory—it may not therefore be exact, word for word, but is the substance of the paragraph.

we request, as you are in correspondence with the Secretary of State, that you would communicate this letter to *him that those from whom he received his appointment* (italics inserted) may know the opinion entertained of him by those acquainted with his conduct.

We are yours etc.

To Mr. Walker—

[Endorsement:] Copy of a letter from the Proprietors to Mr. Walker to be communicated to Mr. Jefferson.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>118</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

L'Enfant has drawn a line with his pencil round the last paragraph and written below in characters today scarcely legible: "to be added to the evidence that I

The same day a letter was prepared for Major L'Enfant and forwarded by the same mail. The letter reads:

Geo town 9 March 1792

Sir

We find by communications from Philadelphia that there is too much reason to apprehend, that the City of Washington, will loose the benefit of your *future* (underscored by L'Enfant) Services,—a circumstance which we lament extremely, not only from regard to our own interests, which we believe no other man, so well qualified to promote by promoting the public object.—But from a sense of justice to yourself, for we well know that your time, and the whole powers of your whole mind, have been for many months entirely devoted to the arrangements in the city, which reflect so much honor on your taste and your judgment.

We still hope some mode of accommodation may be devised, to admit of your return, on principles not derogatory to your feelings nor injurious to the city.—The Commissioners we trust, whatever misunderstandings may have arisen will be very much disposed (for they know and have acknowledged your Talents) to leave you without Control, in all those things in which you would wish to be uncontrolled—and if you will be induced, by a knowledge of the high confidence the proprietors repose in you, to stand less on punctilios, we flatter ourselves that the business of *creating* the city, may be conducted to the final completion of the object

---

have received my appointment from the President.” (Published in full and with L'Enfant's notes for the first time.)

The last paragraph of the Petition as sent, is as follows: “As you are in correspondence with the Secretary of State and as it is but justice to Major L'Enfant that the opinion the Proprietors entertain of his mind, from their own observation, should be known to those to whom he owed his appointment we request you would enclose this letter with your own. We are Sir, Your most obed. Serts. Signed as on page 171 except George Walker was not present.” (Papers of the District, L. C. Hitherto unpublished.)



by the same talents, Zeal and unwearied industry so much distinguished in the commencement of it.

At all events, accept this Testimony of our Sense of Your merits and of the obligation we owe you, as persons much Interested in the City of Washington.—We are etc.

Major L'Enfant.<sup>119</sup>

The original letter was signed by thirteen of the proprietors, as follows:

Robert Peters	<i>Wm. King</i>
John Davidson	<i>Wm. Prout</i>
Sam: Davidson	<i>Overton Carr</i>
Jas. M. Lingan	<i>George Walker</i>
Abraham Young	David Burnes
Ben Stoddert	Eliphaz Douglas <sup>120</sup>
Uriah Forrest	

With the above letters was enclosed the following note from Uriah Forrest

Georgetown, 9 March 1792

Dear Sir,

I believe every Proprietor of land within the Federal City except two have signed the letter which I have now the pleasure to enclose—They send their sentiments respecting your return, or rather respecting their wishes on that subject, to Mr. Walker and to the President, by this night's Post—Copy whereof should you wish it, I can furnish you.

<sup>119</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. Reproduced in part in RECORDS, Vol. 2, p. 137. On the reverse of this letter L'Enfant has written in pencil: "Majr. L'Enfant never received but a duplicate of the letters of which these are the copies. The original was taken away by unknown persons—at some of the post offices on the way to Philadelphia—clearly to prevent the effect which the assurance that the city proprietors wish for his return may have had on his determination to resign his employment . . . The observation may serve to elucidate—that the Commissioners proceedings by which he was so determined were machinated to serve particular interest in driving him out of the concern of the city." Note by L'Enfant here reproduced for the first time.

<sup>120</sup> It is probable that this is the original, afterwards recovered. It was enclosed in a folder addressed to Major L'Enfant, Philadelphia.

The Proprietors of land conceive they cannot give you sufficient evidence of their Sense of your services & exertions in promoting the growth of the City; and they are anxiously solicitous [for] your return, expecting every advantage from your Zeal and Judgment.

I am with esteem and regard

Dr. Sir,

Your most obedt. Ser.

Uriah Forrest.<sup>121</sup>

The Petition of the Proprietors of land forwarded by Mr. Walker was duly received and laid before the President. In a note to the Secretary of State, of March 14th and intended for his direction in answering the Proprietors, Washington wrote:

. . . . .

That no farther movement on the part of Government can ever be made towards Majr L'Enfant without prostration,

<sup>121</sup> Roberdeau, after his release, visited L'Enfant in Philadelphia and then returned as his agent to Georgetown to arrange for the settlement of the Major's affairs. He wrote March 2, 1792: "I understand the proprietors have addressed you many days ago . . . they are uneasy for its safety, as they received a letter from Mr. Jefferson . . . dated the Thursday before I left town, both [letters] were put into this postoffice at the same time—*things of this kind are not uncommon from what cause I know not*" (Italics by L'Enfant). Above in pencil L'Enfant has written: "This letter Majr. L'Enfant never received and as many others seem to have been suppressed by Jefferson's agents."

Roberdeau had much difficulty in settling the claims for supplies ordered in January for the men which the Commissioners had refused to honor. The correspondence regarding this unpleasant business dragged on for several years. Roberdeau in the meantime had joined L'Enfant at Patterson where the latter was engaged by Alexander Hamilton in creating a new industrial city. (See L'Enfant Papers, L. C., Vol. 2. The bill was finally settled in 1796 by the succeeding Board of Commissioners. One of them wrote to Roberdeau:

"I find no compensation has yet been [MS torn] by Major L'Enfant for the great exertion [MS torn] genius and talents. The Board, I am convinced, will consider his claims with attention, for they admit he has done much.—The offer made to him by our Predecessors he thought inadequate. I wish it could be known what he would consider as a compensation—I write now in my private capacity—seeking information for a future Day . . ."

Dr. William Thorton

City of Washington  
June 20th 1795

Commissioner and Designer of the Capitol

*which will not be done.*—That the P. thinks himself insulted in the answer given to his Secretary, who was sent by him for the *express* purpose of removing some of his *unfounded* suspicions viz “that he had already heard enough of this matter.”

No farther overtures will *ever* be made to this gentl<sup>m</sup> by the Government. in truth it would be useless, for in proportion as attempts have been made to accomodate what appeared to be his wishes, he has receded from his own ground.

If therefore his own conduct should change and a reinstatement of him is desired the *only* way to effect it is by a direct application to the Commissioners.

Wednesday afternoon, 14th March 1792 <sup>122</sup>

Jefferson wrote Mr. Walker the same day:

Your favor of March 9 came to hand yesterday with the letter of several of the proprietors of Georgetown, desiring the reemployment of Mj. Lenfant and were duly laid before the President. He would be happy to satisfy the wishes of those gentlemen wherever propriety and practicability admitted. The retirement of Majr. Lenfant has been his own act. Nobody knows better than yourself the patience and condescensions the President used in order to induce him to continue. You know also how these were received on his part. When the President sent his Secretary to take Major Lenfant's ultimate conditions, they were, as I informed you in my former letter a dismissal of the Commissioners or his independence of them. Such conditions could produce one idea only; that his reemployment was never more to be thought of. That it was believed he might have been useful, the efforts to continue him have fully proved, but that the success of the enterprise depended on his employment is impossible to believe.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

<sup>123</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).



The same day the Commissioners following the suggestion of Washington in his letter to Dr. Stuart of March 8th wrote L'Enfant:

—————Ge town  
14th March 1792

Sir,

We have been notified that we are no longer to consider you as engaged in the business of the Federal City. Notwithstanding this event, we wish to convince you that it is not our intention that your past services should go unrecompensed. You will therefore receive from Messrs. Cunningham and Nesbit of Philadelphia five hundred guineas, whenever it may suit you to apply for it. Besides the above sum, we will make you over a lot in the City of Washington, near the President's house or the Capitol as you may chuse.

We

are, Sir,

Your obt. Servants

Dd. Stuart

Commis.<sup>124</sup>

Danl. Carroll

L'Enfant's reaction to this note is seen in the following reply:

Philadelphia, 18 March, 1792—

Gentlemen,

I this day received your favor of the 14th instant—informing me you had ordered *five hundred guineas* to be paid to me by Messrs. *Cunningham & Nesbit* of Philadelphia, which sum you mention as intended for compensation adding to it a lot which you propose making over to me in the city.—Without enquiring of the principle upon which you rest this offer, I shall only here testify my surprise thereupon, as also my intention to decline accepting of it.—in testimony of which I hasten expressing to you my wish and request that

<sup>124</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. Vol. 2. (Hitherto unpublished).

you will recall back your order for the money & not take any trouble about the lot.

I am,

Gentlemen, Your obedient servant.

P. L.

David Stuart

to the Commissioners Daniel Carroll <sup>125</sup>

In due time Jefferson's letter of March 14th reached Georgetown. Mr. Walker wrote him, enclosing a second letter from the Proprietors. He says:

March 21st 1792

Sir,

Your favor of the 14th Inst I had the honour to receive and have communicated the contents to the Proprietors of this City. In consequence of which I this day received the enclosed letter which they wish may be laid before the President of the United States. As I may some time after take an oppt. of conveying to you my Sentiments on this business I shall not add at present but that I am with great esteem and respect

Sir

Your mo. obt. Servant

(Signed) George Walker

The letter of the Proprietors which was addressed to Mr. Walker is as follows:

Georgetown 21 March 1792

Sir

In answer to your communication of Mr. Jefferson's letter to you of the 14<sup>th</sup> Inst., permit us to request the favor of you to inform Mr. Jefferson, as a piece of justice which

<sup>125</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. The original is in Archives P. B. & G. There is nothing in the correspondence of the Commissioners to inform when or how the reply of L'Enfant reached the President. In a private letter to Dr. Stuart of April 8th 1792 Washington asks: "Did Major L'Enfant assign any reason for his rejection of the compensation which had been offered to him?" (See RECORDS, Vol. 17, p. 54.)

<sup>126</sup> Papers of the District, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished.)

seems requisite to ourselves, that we are very far from being so unreasonable as to expect that Maj. L'Enfant would be or to think that he ought to be employed on either of the conditions mentioned in his [Jefferson's] first letter to you & repeated in the second. If M. L'Enfant persists in not returning on any other, we know that all ideas on the subject must be abandoned.—but if on the contrary he should now be willing to accept such conditions as can with propriety be given we should hope that the simple circumstance of his once asking more, would not be deemed sufficient to deprive forever the City of the services of a man of acknowledged Capacity and Merit, who has already been found highly useful.

The Commissioners are respectable men and our own interest as well as a Public Duty would prompt us to give all the little aid in our power to their efforts, which we have no doubt will be directed at least, by good intentions and zeal towards the growth of the City—But we must still lament as a very great misfortune to the object, the loss of a man deservedly (at least in point of talents, zeal, industry & total disinterestedness) possessing in a high degree the public confidence.

The sentiments contained in this, & our former letter, are those of individuals deeply interested in the progress of the city, who do not pretend to set up a claim that additional weight should be given them from the circumstance of their coming from proprietors. A distinction we wish to be made.

We are sir Your Most Obt. Serts.

Jas. M. Ligan	Robert Peters
John Davidson	David Burnes
Sam. Davidson	Abraham Young
Overton Carr	Wm. King
	W. Prout
	U. Forrest
	Ben Stoddert <sup>127</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Papers of the District, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished.)



On the same day the Proprietors wrote L'Enfant as follows:

Georgetown 21. March, 1792.

Sir,

We did ourselves the pleasure to write you the 9th inst. a letter expressive of our high sense of your merits, and conveying in strong terms our wish that matters might be accommodated so as to admit of your return,—an event which would afford us the highest satisfaction. At the same time we took the liberty to address a letter for the perusal of Mr. Jefferson copies of both which we now enclose, because Mr. Roberdeau tells us you had not received our letter to you when he left, and possibly you may not have since received it.

It appears from Mr. Jefferson's communications to Mr. Walker that the President has been extremely anxious for your return—that he has done every thing in his power to promote it—and that your ultimate decision as given through Mr. Lear, was in substance that you would return only on one of two conditions.<sup>128</sup> of being made independent of the commissioners—or their dismissal—conditions impossible to be complied with for the law of Congress certainly does not authorize the President to create a power in the city independent of the Commissioners, nor with all his deservedly high reputation and popularity would it be prudent . . . . to dismiss the Commissioners on such a principle—for however unequal they may be to the task of rearing the city, they are certainly men of respectable character and connections, and who would be very much disposed to coincide with all your views for the benefit of the city, as their good intentions for the object are undoubted.

Mr. Roberdeau delivered us yesterday your favor of the 10th instant, for which we are much obliged to you, and shall certainly profit by your advice, but still thinking your as-

<sup>128</sup> L'Enfant here placed a cross and wrote below: "No greater lie could ever be and in proof see my letter of February 17, 1792 to Mr. Lear."

sistance of the utmost importance we cannot easily relinquish our wishes for your return—and hope that your own good sense will point out to you the impossibility of the President's offering you such terms as he might himself think your merits entitle you to—and that your zeal to promote the city, together with your knowledge of possessing the entire confidence of the bulk of proprietors will induce you to accept such as it is possible to give.

We are with respect & esteem Sir,  
Yr. most Obed. serv.<sup>129</sup>

The above was accompanied by a personal letter from Mr. Uriah Forrest, who wrote under the same date:

Georgetown 21 March 1792

Dear Sir,

I had the pleasure to write you on the 9th covering a letter from all the Proprietors, except two, in the City of Washington expressive of their desire for your return and of their obligations for the services you have rendered. At the same time was forwarded a letter to that effect for the perusal of the President & which Mr. Jefferson writes was laid before him. Copies of both with a second letter from the proprietors will accompany this.

It is unquestionably the wish of every proprietor, these two excepted, that you should be suffered to accomplish the business of the city, and they had not hope but expect to gratify their wishes & to acquire the fame which will be the certain consequence of your resuming the direction, that you will not stand so rigidly on punctilio in the commencement of a treaty that may lead to it—They have no doubt it is your wish to return, if it can be done consistent with your own honor and with a prospect of finally succeeding in what they believe to be your favorite object. They doubt not as to the President's wish. They are sure that what Mr. Jefferson writes Mr. Walker as the only terms on which you will re-

<sup>129</sup> L'Enfant Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).

turn cannot be granted. But they believe that in “conducting the affairs of the city independent of the Commissioners” you had no idea of that entire independence which should admit of no control in the disposition of the property or the expenditure of the money. Their ideas of your wishes on that head are that you should be so far independent as to be without control in the execution of every particular object after the measure shall have been approved<sup>130</sup>—in short that the estimates of men and money shall be laid before the Commrs. who shall grant or reject, but when once granted you are exclusively to direct—Thus far the Proprietors take for granted the President will willingly agree to, and they doubt not the Commissioners will cheerfully acquiesce. The great difficulty then to my mind is the opening of a treaty. I have some reason to believe that Mr. Walker’s business will take him to Philadelphia in a short time, perhaps the next stage—for his management and address I have great respect.

I am sure in the event of your return the Commissioners will act as you could wish them and study accommodations—They are acquainted with the wishes of the inhabitants and those immediately interested in the city. But it is impossible for the Proprietors to ask (even if asking would have any effect) either of the two conditions which it is reported you demand. The law will not suffer the President to set up an authority paramount to the Commissioners—and if they were more unequal to the direction than they are their dismissal would be out of the question. I have not time to add but that I am with real esteem

Dr. Sir

Your obd. sevt.

(Signed) Uriah Forrest.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>130</sup> L’Enfant has marked the above lines by drawing a pencil round them, and below has written: “This charge was false and purposely to deceive the citizens and to quiet their protest by making me appear the cause.”

<sup>131</sup> L’Enfant’s, Papers, L. C. On the side of the endorsement there is the word “interesting” in pencil apparently by L’Enfant.

In response to the second letter of the Proprietors Jefferson wrote as follows to Mr. Walker:

Philadelphia March 26 1792

Sir

I have duly received your favor of the 21st with the letter from sundry inhabitants of Georgetown which in enclosed, and have laid them before the President. You have before understood Sir, that Majr. L'Enfant was originally called into the service by Mr. Carroll, who doubting, before Major L'Enfant's arrival here, whether he could with propriety act as a Commissioner while he remained member of the legislature, it fell on the President to point out to the Major the objects of his attention and to send him on to the other Commissioners under whose employment and direction he was explicitly informed he was to act. This accident alone gave an appearance of an original interference by the President which it neither was nor is his intention to practice. Whoever wishes for employment whether it be Maj. L'Enfant or any other must apply to the Commissioners directly. The President having decided not to meddle with those details, he would certainly wish to do what would gratify the inhabitants, in any instance where it could be consistent with propriety. in the present he can do no more than leave the Commissioners free to follow their own judgment.

I am with great esteem, Sir,  
Your most obedt. sert.  
Th. Jefferson

Mr. George Walker.<sup>132</sup>

L'Enfant made no further attempt to explain matters or to struggle against the combination which opposed itself to his views. With the following courteous and dignified note he closed the correspondence with the Proprietors. This

<sup>132</sup> Jefferson Papers, L. C. (Hitherto unpublished).



letter also closes the episode of Major L'Enfant's connection with the Federal City.

Philadelphia, April the 1st, 1792.

My dear Sir,

The wish of the Proprietors of land within the Federal City as expressed in their letter to me, and by yourself, being too flattering a testimony of their sentiments not to impress me with a sense of my obligation towards them, I must here beg you will assure those gentlemen of my regret of the *accumulating circumstance* opposing to an accomodation as they conceive may induce me to engage anew in the business of the Federal establishment—You may assure them and with confidence, that in my objection I do not stand upon punctilio nor am actuated by motives of pride or disregard or of enmity toward any of the primary managers of the business, but that I have been wholly determined from a conviction of an impossibility to effect the undertaking begun under a system of direction which must perpetuate misunderstanding amongst the parties concerned.<sup>133</sup>

Assure them also that had not this consideration prevailed over all others of personal interest and of inclination, the respect I have for the President would have made me readily submit to his wish—and I would have anticipated their sollicitations to determine me, by endeavoring to conduct the business, subjecting myself to every inconveniency, so ever offensive it might have been to my feeling.

I have the honor to be

My dear Sir,

Mr. G. Walker.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>133</sup> In pencil L'Enfant has written here: "See what system—uncontrolled submission to the will of the Commissioners . . [illegible]"

<sup>134</sup> L'Enfant Papers. Draft in handwriting of L'Enfant.

Published in the March number of the D. A. R. Magazine for 1929.

## MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

- I. L'ENFANT-DIGGES-MORGAN COLLECTION, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress, 4 vols.
- II. THE L'ENFANT PLAN, Division of Maps, L. C.
- III. LETTERS OF THE PRESIDENTS REGARDING THE FEDERAL CITY, Division of Manuscripts, L. C.
- IV. PAPERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, Division of Manuscripts, L. C., 2 vols.
- V. LETTERS RECEIVED BY COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS, Archives of Public Buildings and Grounds, 1 vol. containing the four L'Enfant Reports to the President, unbound.
- VI. WASHINGTON PAPERS, L. C.
- VII. JEFFERSON PAPERS, L. C.
- VIII. LETTERS TO MADISON, L. C.
- IX. TAGGART COLLECTION OF MISCELLANEOUS L'ENFANT PAPERS, L. C.

## PUBLISHED SOURCES

- I. RECORDS of the Columbia Historical Society
  - Vol. 2: 1. 3 L'Enfant Reports to the President
  2. The L'Enfant Memorials
  3. Miscellaneous Letters of L'Enfant
  4. Sketch of Robert Brent.
- Vol. 17: WRITINGS OF WASHINGTON relating to the National Capital.
- II. L'ENFANT AND THE FEDERAL CITY by J. J. JUS-SERAND.
- III. WASHINGTON DIARIES Edited by J. C. FITZPATRICK.
- IV. STANDARD HISTORY of the CITY of WASHINGTON by WILLIAM TINDALL.
- V. WRITINGS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON, Memorial Edition.



















